

Begin reading this new story of the fabulous Trigans to-day . . .

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Countless miles from Earth is the galaxy of Yarna, and in that galaxy is the planet Elekton. And the greatest power on Elekton is *The Trigan Empire* . . .

In the fourth month of the year of Rass, the people from the far-flung limits of the Empire journeyed to Trigan City to join the expectant crowds who massed before the Imperial Palace. Early one morning, a figure appeared on the balcony . . .

Trigans! . . . I have great news for you . . .

It is the Lord Brag!

The emperor Trigo's faithful brother, Brag, made the momentous announcement . . .

People of Trigan . . . it gives me great pleasure to tell you that his Imperial Majesty has just been blessed with a son and heir . . . long live the little Prince of Trigan!

A great chorus of joy arose from the multitude. Long live the little Prince!

Long live the Emperor and Empress!

Later, Brag quitted the balcony. Once out of sight of the people, his simple countenance took on a haunted expression . . . and he met the eyes of wise old Peric . . .

And now . . . who's to break the news to Trigo?

You . . . who else?

Well? . . . it seems that the people have been informed . . . perhaps I . . . as the father of the child . . . may now be let into the secret?

The emperor Trigo had been pacing the floor of his study, awaiting news of the birth. He turned as his brother entered . . .

Brag led his brother to a chamber where there was a curtained arras . . . grimly, he prepared to draw aside the curtain . . .

Steel yourself for a shock, Trigo!

What . . . what are you going to show me?

The curtain parted . . . and . . .

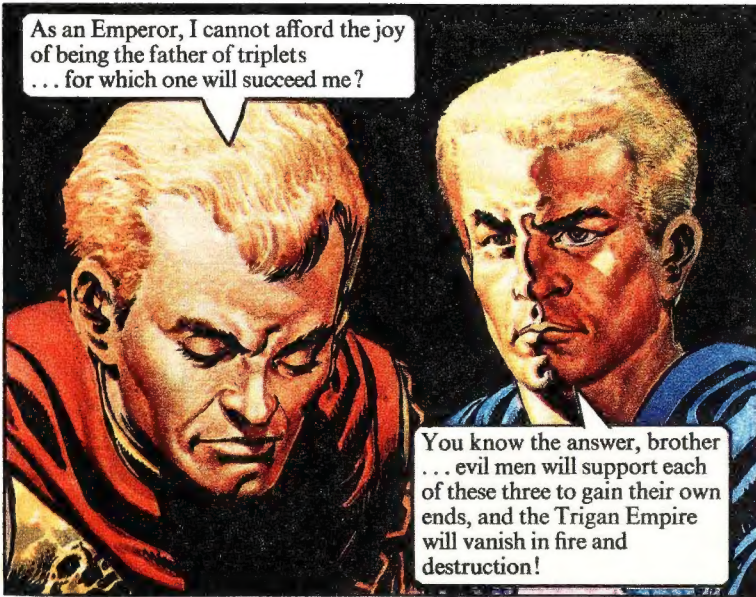
Lying on the soft coverlet of a bed were *three* healthy, babies!

All boys, Trigo . . . and real Trigan warriors!

But . . . triplets . . . how could this happen to me?

No! . . . oh, no! . . . it can't be true!

Fate can play terrible tricks, Trigo!



As an Emperor, I cannot afford the joy of being the father of triplets ... for which one will succeed me?

You know the answer, brother ... evil men will support each of these three to gain their own ends, and the Trigan Empire will vanish in fire and destruction!



Trigo! ... I have told the people that there is *one* Prince ... and that is the way it must be!

Brag! ... you mean I must choose?



And so the emperor of the Trigans had to make a heart-rending decision ... for the sake of his people ...

I have only one son ... *this* child!

When it was dark, Salvia the daughter of old Peric stole out of the city by a little-used gate ... and went out into the dark plain of Vorg. In her arms she carried *two* sleeping infants ...



What a terrible responsibility I have taken upon myself.

She wandered far across the plain, wrestling with her conscience. At dawn, she came upon a column of Nord Tribesmen ... Nomads of Vorg.



Then ... you'll take them into your care?

Aye ... I have no children of my own ... they will be like sons to me.

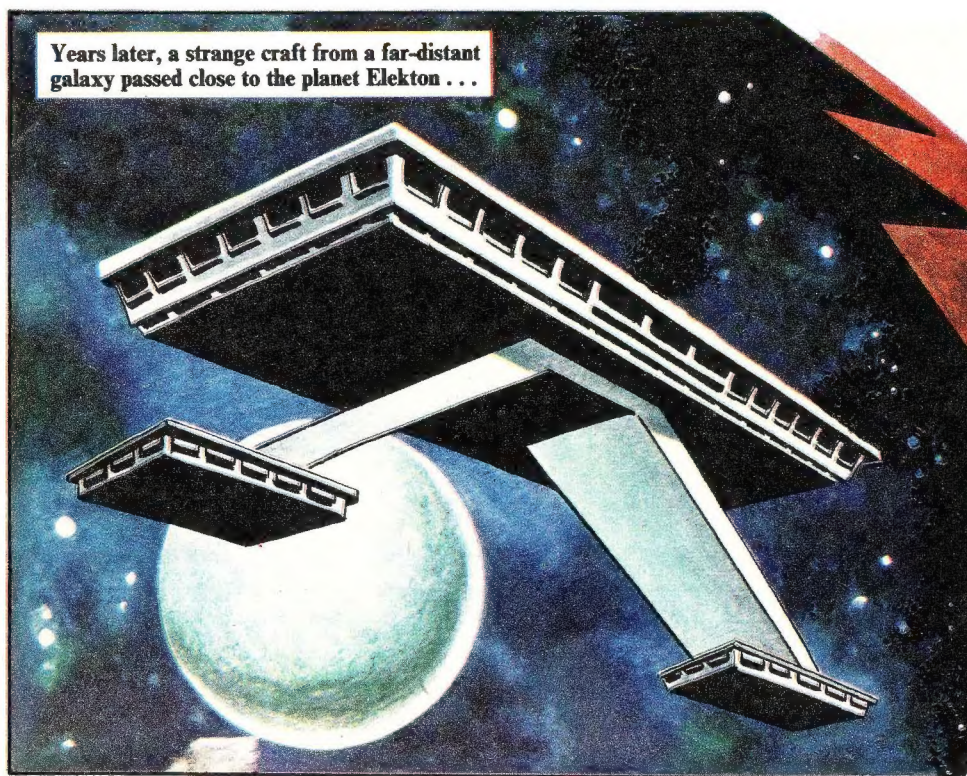
And so, Salvia returned to Trigan city ... with her mind at ease ...

They will live ... and I shall never speak to anyone of what has happened ... oh, I *hope* no evil will come of what I've done!

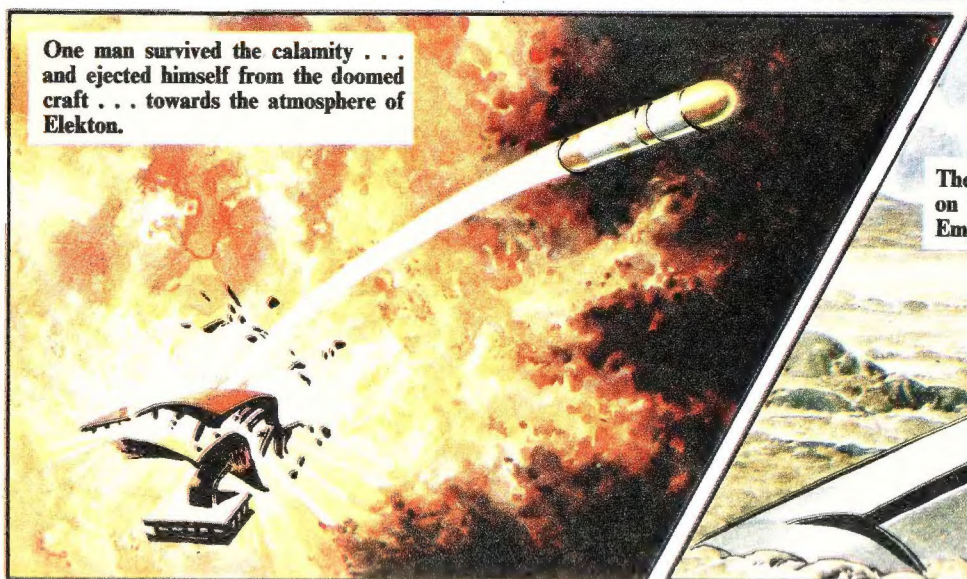
The TRIGAN EMPIRE

When triplet sons were born to the Emperor of Trigan, it became necessary to dispossess two of them secretly, so that—at the death of the Emperor—the land would not be rent by civil war to decide the heir.
And so there is now only *one* Prince of Trigan . . .

Years later, a strange craft from a far-distant galaxy passed close to the planet Elekton . . .



And then—*disaster!* The craft was struck by a giant meteorite!



One man survived the calamity . . . and ejected himself from the doomed craft . . . towards the atmosphere of Elekton.

The alien escape capsule came to rest on the Plain of Vorg, in the Trigan Empire . . .



Hooded, dark eyes scanned the empty horizon. The people of the distant galaxy were of a fantastically superior intelligence, and their minds were driven by one force . . . evil!

So I am doomed to remain for ever on this accursed planet . . . then I must make it mine . . . all mine!

Some days later, a wandering Vorg hunter was preparing his simple meal when he saw the *stranger* approaching . . .



Who are you?



And then . . .

No! . . . Don't hurt me . . . don't . . .

The power of the people of the alien galaxy lay in their ability to communicate by thought waves. The mind of the terrified hunter was bombarded by questions . . .



You will tell me all I need to know . . . what is this place? . . . who are its people? . . . its rulers? . . . tell me everything!



The wretched hunter babbled . . . everything . . .

This is the Plain of Vorg . . . part of the Trigan Empire, ruled by the Emperor Trigo . . . he has one son, a child called Prince Argo . . .



Some months later, in his palace in Trigan City, the Emperor was busy with affairs of state . . .



Suddenly, a pebble stung the Emperor—agonisingly—at the back of the neck!

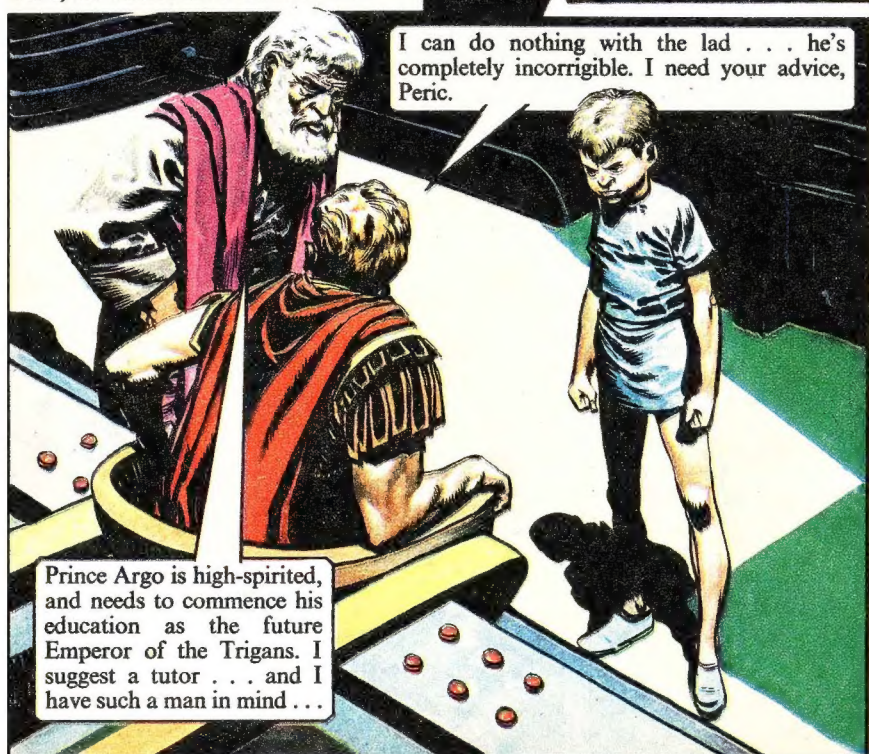
Aaaagh! . . . by all the stars!



Argo, you young demon! . . . I'll have the hide off you!

Don't you dare hurt me . . . or when I grow up, I'll kill you!

Later that day, Trigo summoned his friend Peric, the wisest man on Elekton . . .



I can do nothing with the lad . . . he's completely incorrigible. I need your advice, Peric.

Prince Argo is high-spirited, and needs to commence his education as the future Emperor of the Trigans. I suggest a tutor . . . and I have such a man in mind . . .



Peric brought in a dark-haired stranger . . .

This is the man, Imperial Majesty . . . he has travelled far, and is a master of all the arts and sciences. A fit person to teach our future Emperor.



I am honoured . . . Imperial Majesty!

It was the evil creature from the alien galaxy!

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

WHEN triplet sons were born to the Emperor Trigo, it became necessary to dispose of two of them secretly, so that—at the death of the Emperor—the land would not be rent by civil war.

Years later, a tutor was appointed for the young Prince Argo. Unknown to anyone, the tutor was none other than a stranded creature from an alien planet . . . an evil creature with strange powers . . .



Ten years passed . . . one day, the thunder of pounding hooves resounded in the arena at Trigan . . . and a whooping boy rode his kreed straight at a rearing Zargot.



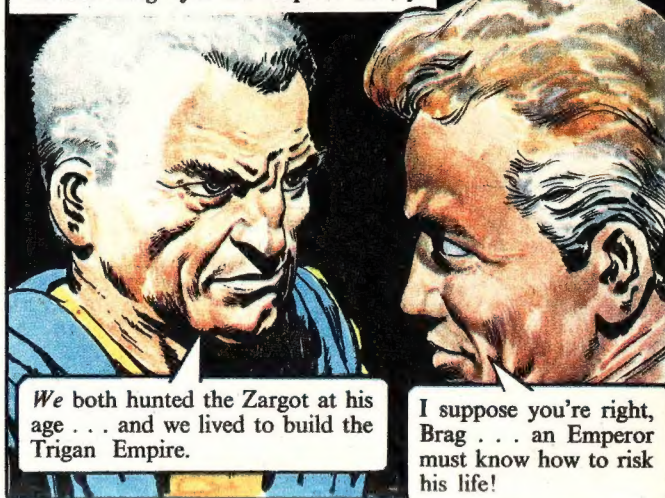
Ducking the sweep of the sharp talons, the boy drove his hunting spear forward . . . and the great beast fell.

Brag had watched the thrilling encounter. He turned with a start as his brother Trigo appeared.



Have you taken leave of your senses . . . allowing the heir to the imperial throne to risk his life like that?

Faithful Brag eyed the emperor keenly.



We both hunted the Zargot at his age . . . and we lived to build the Trigan Empire.

I suppose you're right, Brag . . . an Emperor must know how to risk his life!



The brothers were joined by the young prince . . . and his tutor.

I hear that the prince is also brilliant at his school work, Thringa . . . and we have you to thank for that.

His highness is a good pupil, Imperial Majesty.

The man who called himself Thringa gave a thin smile.



This, then, was the pattern of the young prince's life . . . lessons in the warlike arts from his uncle . . . school work from Thringa. And Roffa taught him to fly . . .

Take over . . . she's all yours!



With Argo at the controls, the craft nosed into a screaming dive . . .

Steady! . . . don't do anything stupid, you young hothead!

Roffa saw their peril . . .



Look out . . .
you'll kill
us both!

Roffa covered his eyes . . .
and it was all over . . .



Moments later, the man from the alien galaxy brought his
strange powers to bear on the mind of the young boy . . .



All I have taught you is directed
to one end . . . Now—tell me
what you are soon to do . . .

Roffa's legs were still trembling
when he clawed his way out of the
craft, back at the air field.



Well . . . am I
skilful enough to
go on my own?

You'll be the finest
pilot in the Trigan
air fleet one day . . . *if*
you don't kill yourself
first!

Later that day,
Prince Argo reported
to his tutor.



Yes, sir.

Aaaah . . . ready
for your lesson,
your highness?

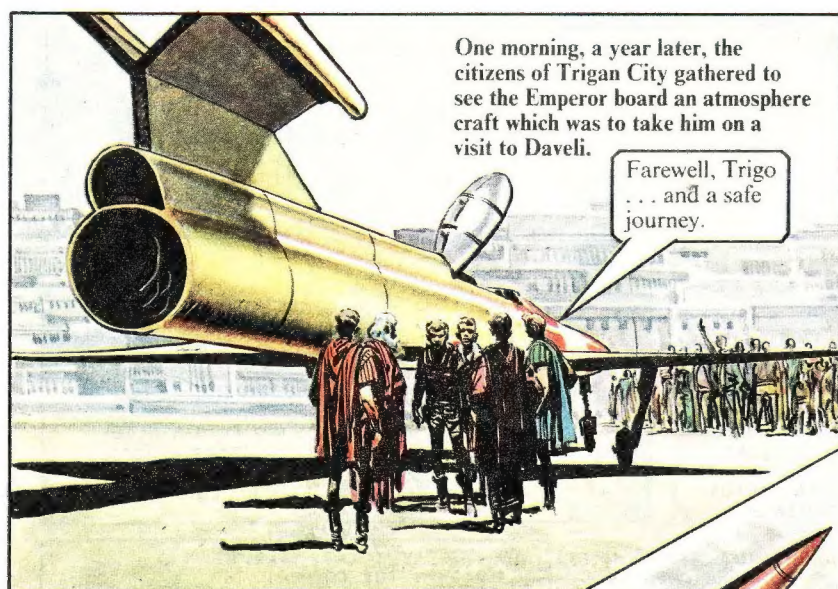


I am to slay my father and become
emperor . . . and then you will be my
master, and master of the Empire!

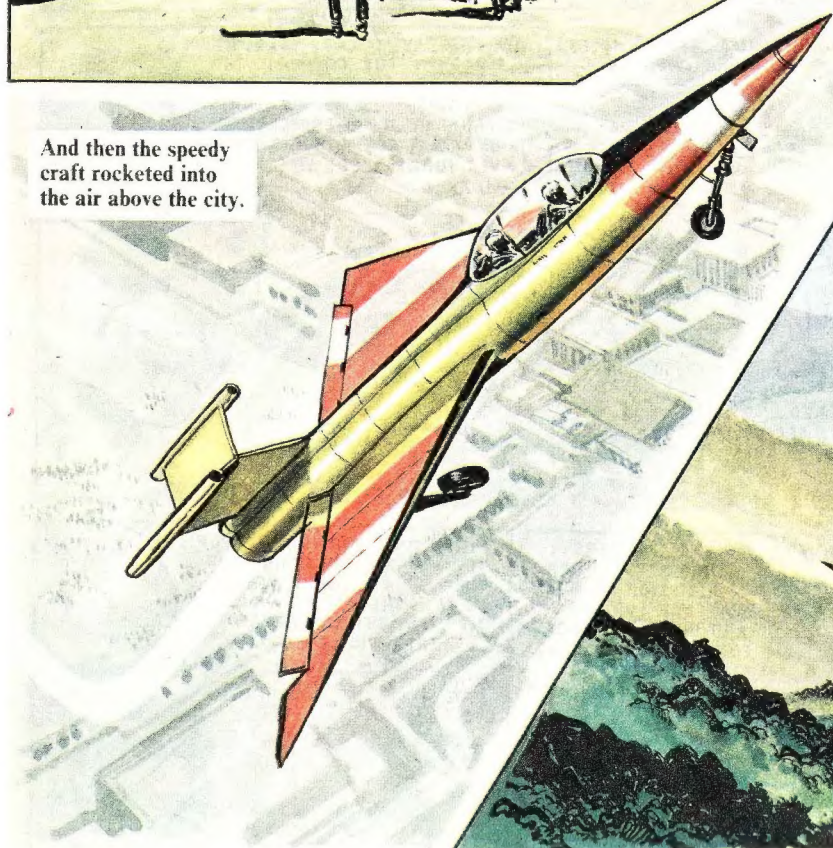
NEXT WEEK: A TRAGIC FLIGHT

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Unknown to anyone, the tutor of the valiant young prince Argo of the Trigan Empire is an alien creature from another galaxy, who has taken possession of the Prince's will by means of his uncanny powers . . .



And then the speedy craft rocketed into the air above the city.



Later . . . much later . . . and high above the dense jungle of Daveli . . .



... Which plunged into the jungle, and exploded in a fireball!

There was only mocking triumph in Argo's eyes as he gazed down at his father's end.

The safety mechanism brought him down near the edge of the jungle, where he was found by a party of Vorg hunters.

Escort me to Trigan City!

Faithful Brag's great heart nearly broke when the tragic news was brought to him by old Peric.

Trigo... Trigo... oh why couldn't it have been me? I would gladly have perished in your place!

You must be strong, Brag... and thank the stars that Argo survived the crash.

When the first shock of grief had passed, he went to his nephew...

Poor lad... these are young shoulders to have to bear the great weight of the Trigan Empire!

I will try to bear that weight... for the sake of my people.

A few days later, the captains of the Empire watched their boy-emperor crown himself.

Long live the Emperor Argo!

Thringa looked on, evilly...

Now I am the master of the Trigan Empire... tomorrow of all the Planet Eiekton!

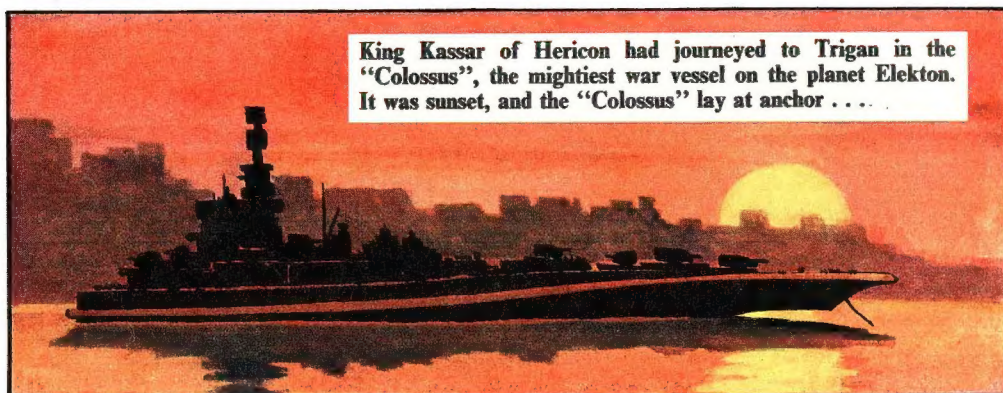
Next week: Crisis for three kings.

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Following the death of his father in an air disaster, the valiant young Prince Argo has just been crowned Emperor of the Trigans . . .



No one saw the Trigan atmosphere craft swooping out of the dying sun . . . and its projectile rocketed towards the doomed monster.



An hour after sunset, the four kings were led into the presence of the new emperor of the Trigans.





Kassar of Hericon was not a man to be intimidated

You mad young fool! Do you think I would bind my people into slavery? I would rather die!

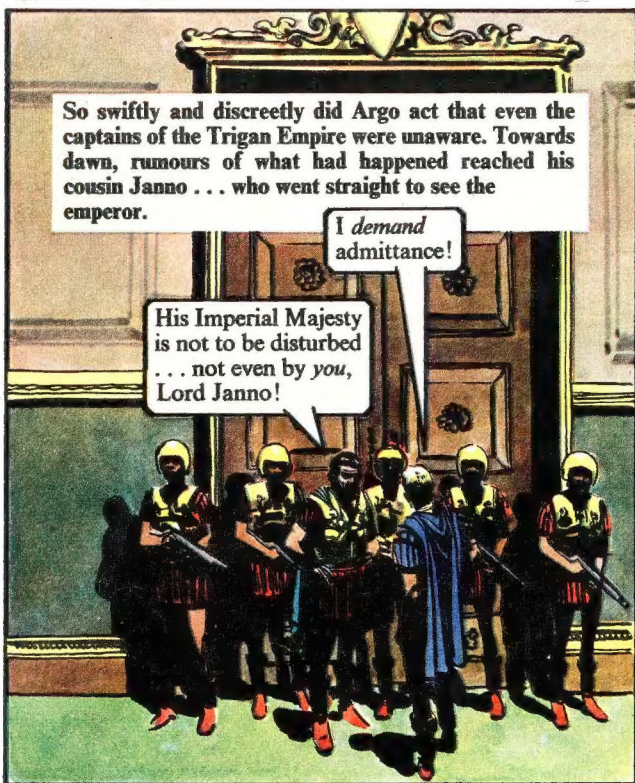
These four documents hand over the sovereignty of the lands of Daveli, Hericon, Cato and Tharv to me! You four will sign them . . . immediately!

Your wish is easily granted. The executioner awaits in the courtyard below . . . take him away!

Kassar was dragged out . . . and Argo stared coldly at the shocked faces of the remaining kings.



Sign!



So swiftly and discreetly did Argo act that even the captains of the Trigan Empire were unaware. Towards dawn, rumours of what had happened reached his cousin Janno . . . who went straight to see the emperor.

I demand admittance!

His Imperial Majesty is not to be disturbed . . . not even by you, Lord Janno!



Janno strode out into the palace gardens. High above him, the lights from the imperial apartments twinkled in the dawn.

There's more than one way in!

Janno saw everything . . . he saw the newly-crowned emperor standing before his mysterious tutor, listening with glazed eyes to a dreadful "lesson" . . .



Clawing his way up the steep face of the palace, Janno came at last to the balcony . . . he heard voices . . .

He's got Thringa with him . . .



You have done well! all the peoples of Elektion are at your mercy, and now you will make them your slaves, do you hear?

I hear . . .

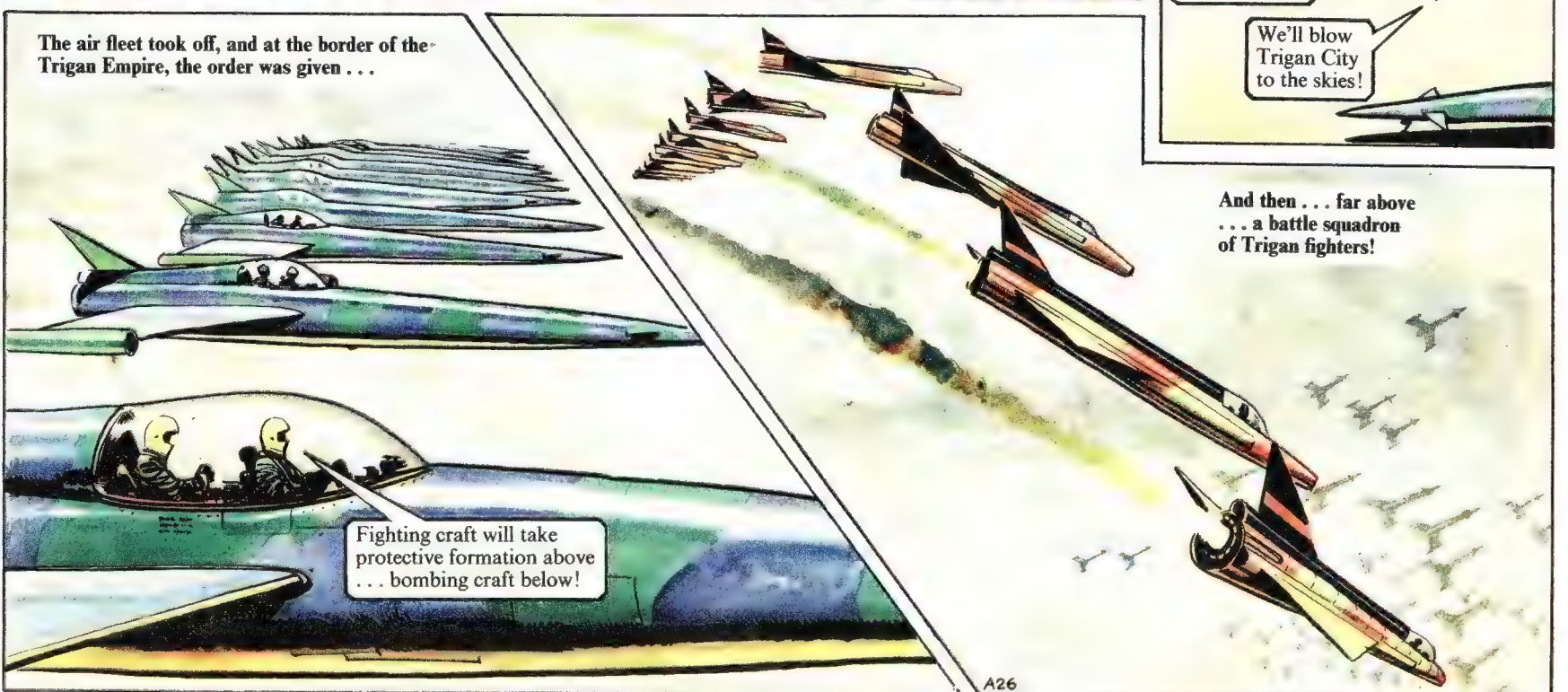
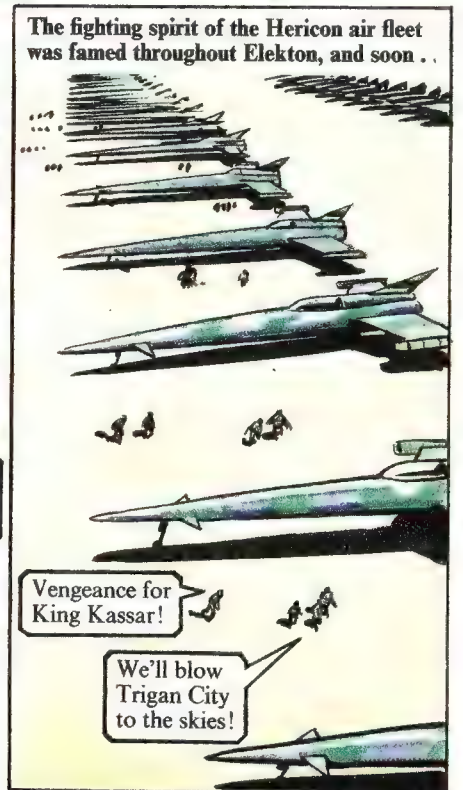


You will enslave them by terror, so that they will obey your slightest command . . . as YOU obey MINE!

NEXT WEEK: The Hericons thirst for revenge.

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Immediately following his coronation as Emperor of the Trigans, young Argo has treacherously seized power over all the planet Elekton. An unseen watcher—his cousin Janno—learns that the boy Emperor is really being manipulated by the fantastic powers of his tutor, the sinister Thringa . . .



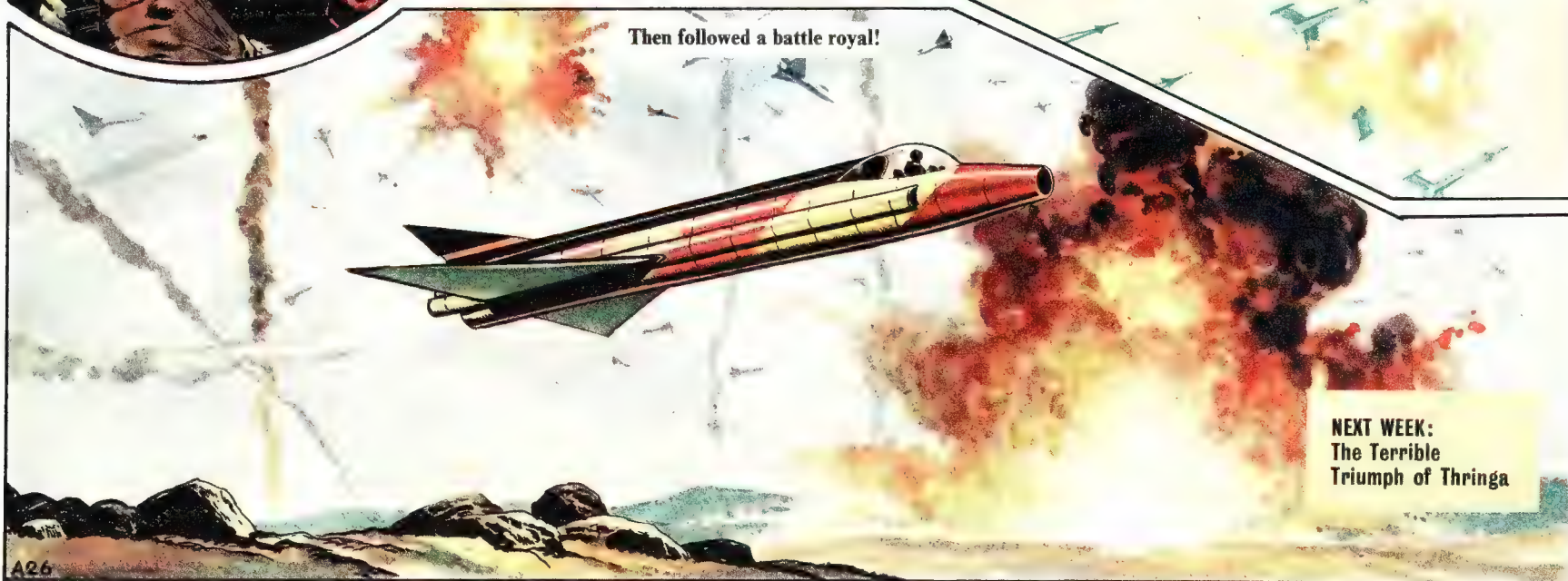
At the controls of the leading craft was
Trigan's finest pilot . . . the Emperor
Argo himself!



Attack . . . attack
. . . attack . . .

Argo led in that breath-robbing swoop of destruction
. . . and his cannons raked the leading line of Hericons.

Then followed a battle royal!

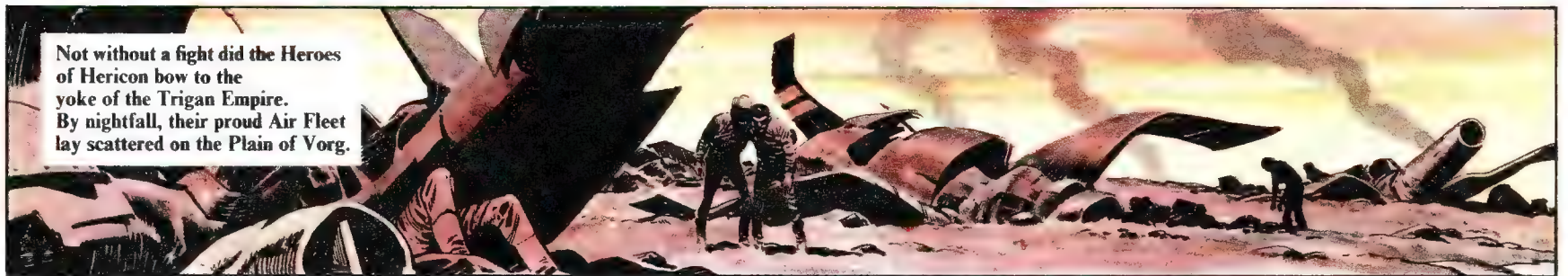


NEXT WEEK:
The Terrible
Triumph of Thringa

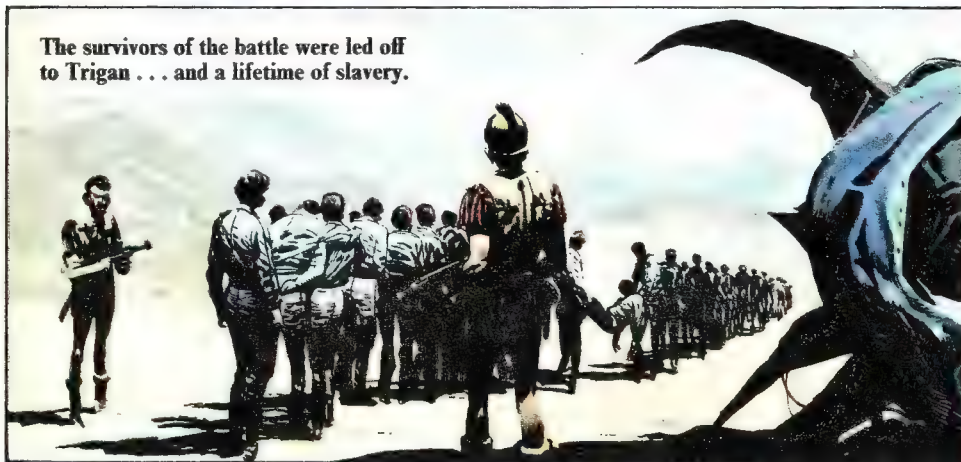
The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Immediately following his coronation as Emperor of the Trigans, young Argo—who is manipulated by the fantastic powers of his tutor Thringa—seizes power over all the planet Elekton.

The Air Fleet of Hericon defies Argo, and a great air battle follows . . .



Not without a fight did the Heroes of Hericon bow to the yoke of the Trigan Empire. By nightfall, their proud Air Fleet lay scattered on the Plain of Vorg.



The survivors of the battle were led off to Trigan . . . and a lifetime of slavery.



Even the free citizens of Trigan suffered under Argo's reign of terror.

I protest! I am a retired officer of the Trigan Fleet!

Silence! . . . by order of his Imperial Majesty, you are all slaves!

Day and night, the slaves laboured to build a towering palace . . . for Thringa!



This is all for you, my friend. Anything you ask for, you shall have!

The creature who called himself Thringa had good cause to triumph.

I came here as a fugitive from outer space. In a few short years, I have become the REAL master of the planet Elekton!



As the terror increased, many brave men plotted to overthrow the tyrant and his creature. The three comrades Janno, Keren and Roffa called on old Peric . . .

Peric, we've got to fight!

And how do you propose to go about it, might one ask?



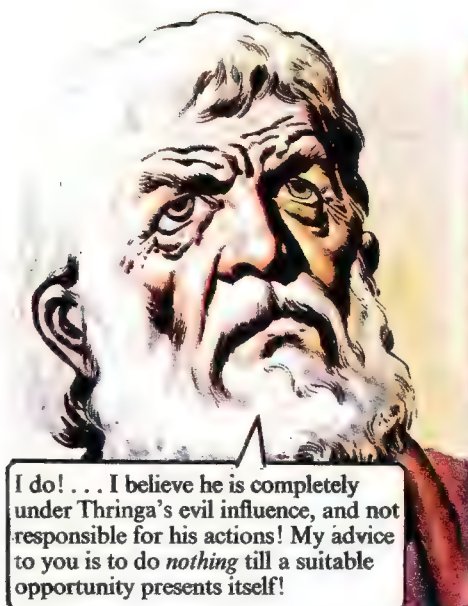
We could start a mutiny in the armed forces . . . overthrow Argo and declare a Republic!

It's a desperate plan, but it might succeed!



It would succeed only in getting the three of you *executed*! If Argo would kill his own father to gain the Imperial Crown, do you think he would hesitate to trample you underfoot? . . .

Peric! . . . do you really think he killed my uncle Trigo?



I do! . . . I believe he is completely under Thringa's evil influence, and not responsible for his actions! My advice to you is to do *nothing* till a suitable opportunity presents itself!



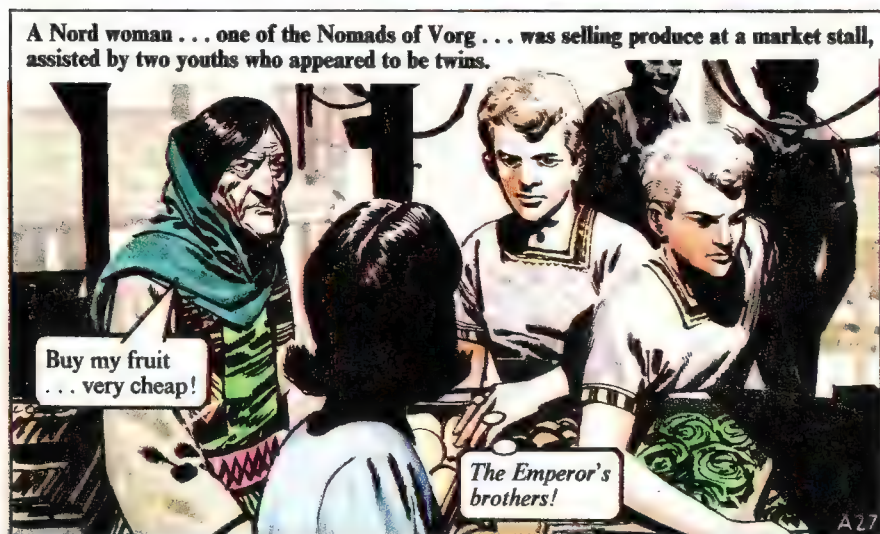
Later that day, Peric's daughter Salvia went into the market place to buy provisions.

Argo's guards are everywhere!



And then . . . she saw . . . *them*!

No! . . . it *can't* be . . . but . . . it *is*!



A Nord woman . . . one of the Nomads of Vorg . . . was selling produce at a market stall, assisted by two youths who appeared to be twins.

Buy my fruit . . . very cheap!

The Emperor's brothers!



Salvia's mind went back through the years . . . to the day she had gone into the Plain of Vorg to dispose of two of Trigo's triplet sons . . .

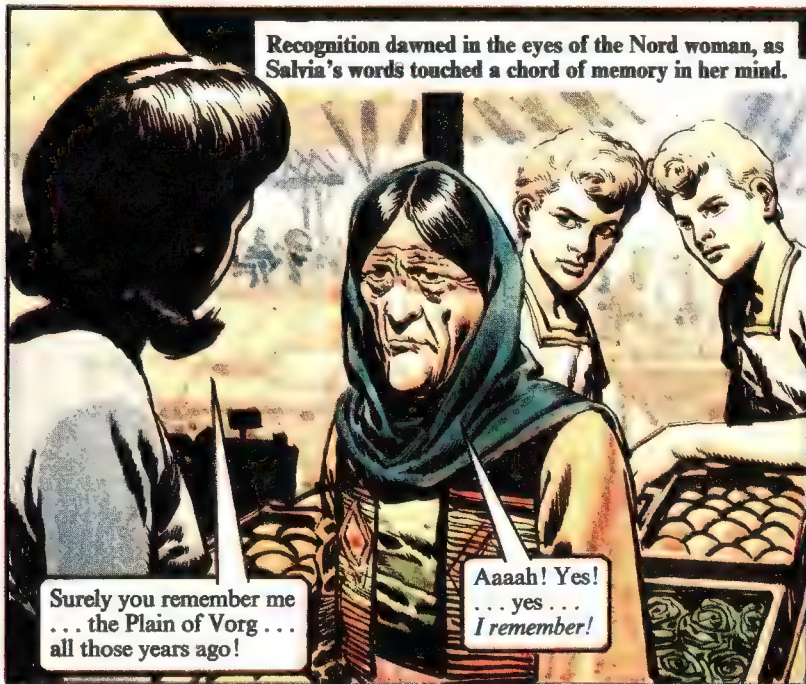
It's *unbelievable*!

What ails you, lady? . . . why are you staring at my lads in that manner?

Next week: A plan to overthrow the tyrant Argo

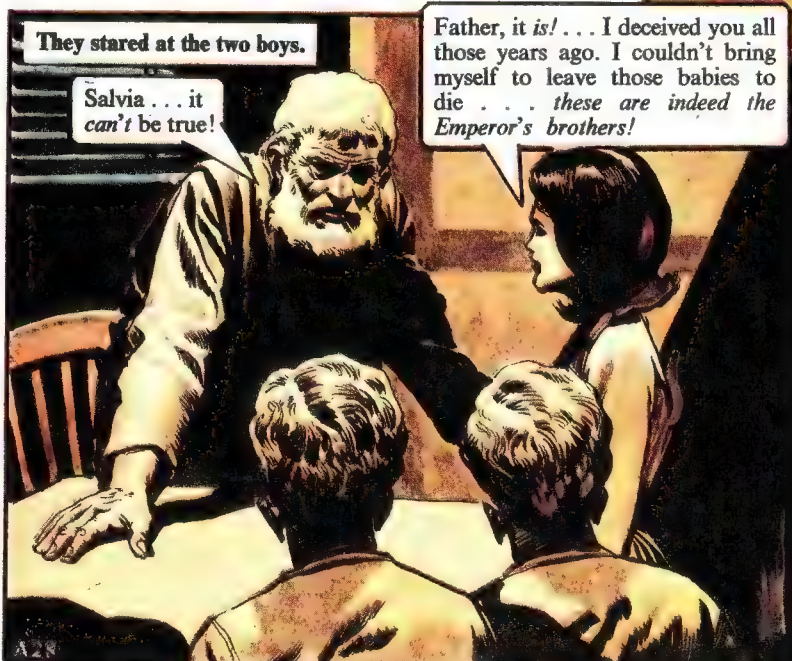
The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Manipulated by the evil influence of his tutor, Thringa, the young Emperor Argo has seized power over all the planet Elekton and instituted a reign of terror. In the market place of Trigan City, Salvia has an astounding meeting . . .

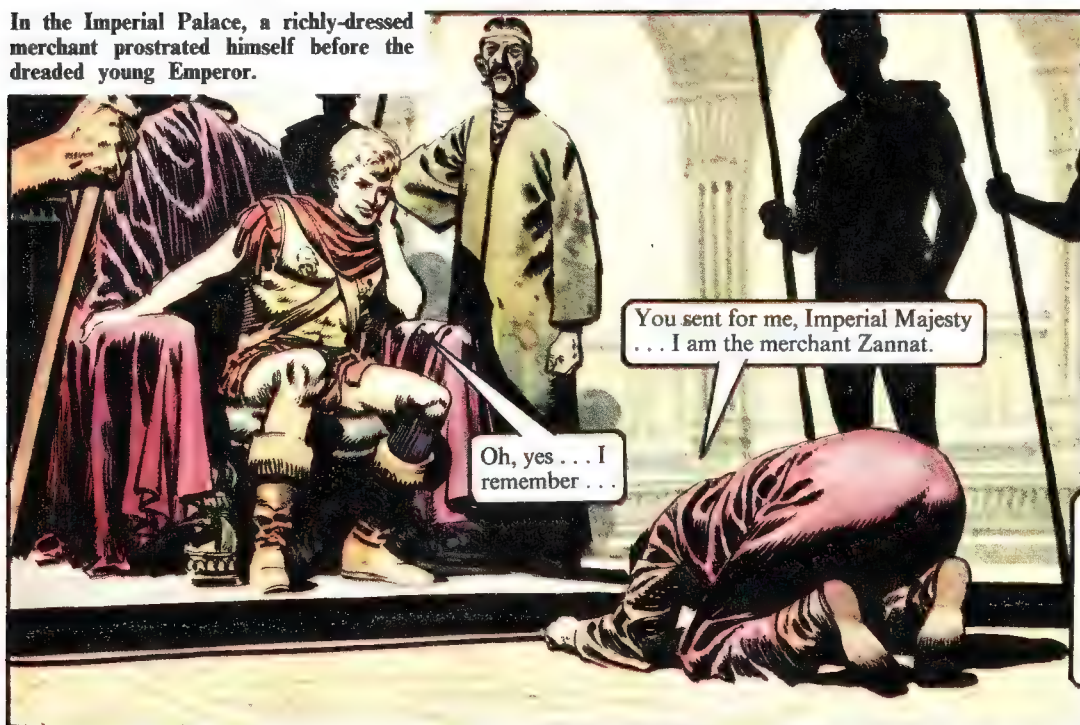


Presently, numb with shock and grief, the Nord woman addressed the two boys.

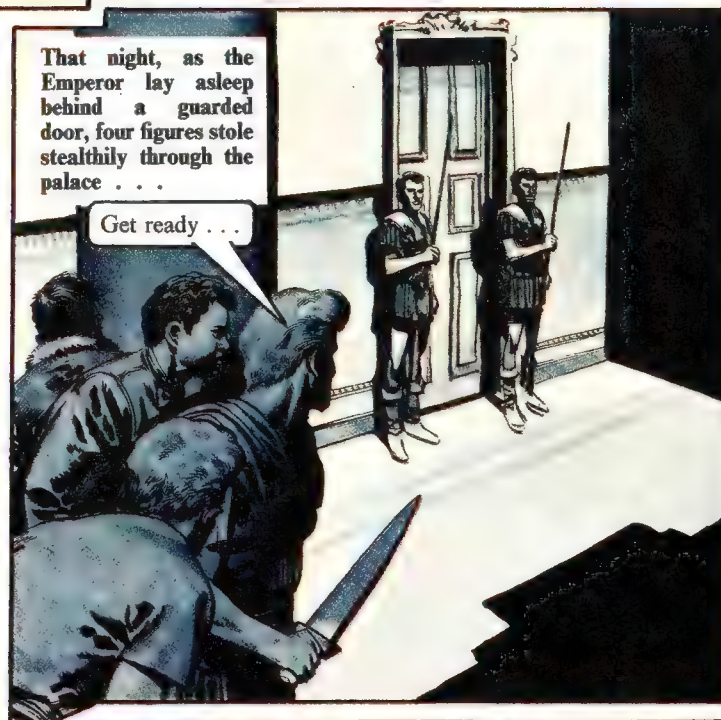
Wise old Peric was at supper with his young friends Janno, Keren and Roffa, when Salvia returned home.



In the Imperial Palace, a richly-dressed merchant prostrated himself before the dreaded young Emperor.



Zannat's voice rose in a wail of dismay ...



A swift, concerted rush ... and the guards were silently felled!

In a few moments, Rilla, you will be Emperor of the Trigans!



NEXT WEEK: END OF A TYRANT

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Janno and his comrades have entered the Palace to overpower the tyrannical Emperor Argo and secretly replace him with one of his triplet brothers . . .



Keren's hard fist sent Argo sprawling, senseless, to the floor.



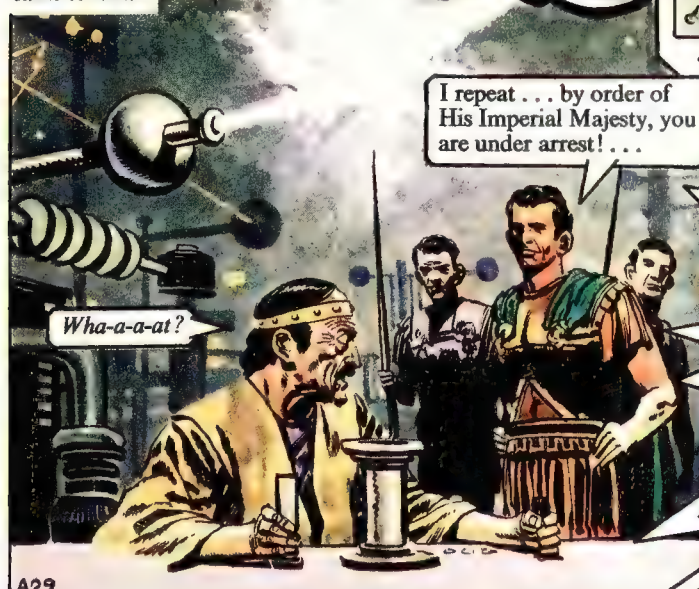
Moments later, the conspirators left with their limp burden.



At daybreak, as was the custom, the captain of the Imperial guard reported to the Emperor for his daily orders . . . and received a shock!



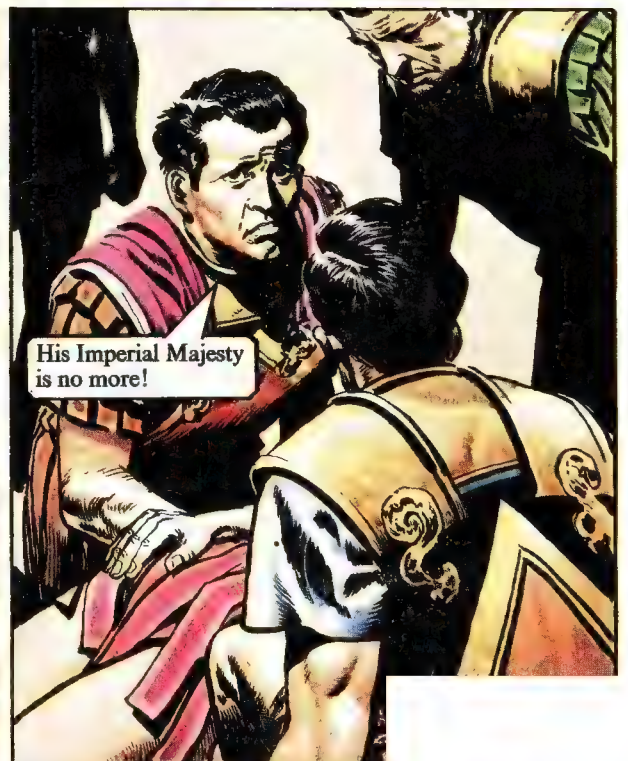
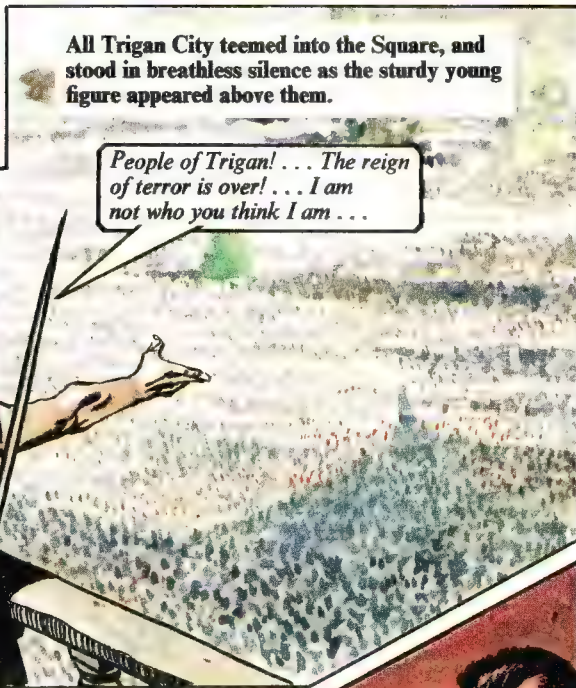
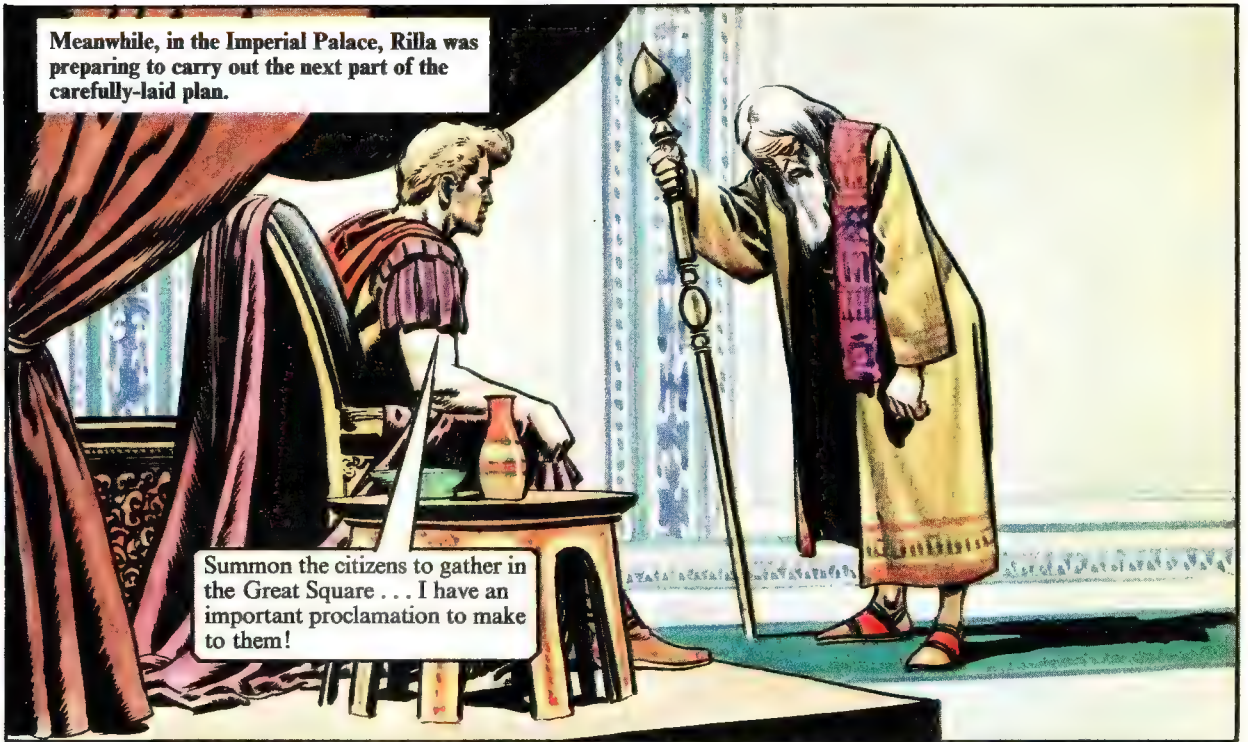
Thringa . . . the evil genius from outer space who ruled Argo's mind . . . was engaged in a fiendish scientific experiment when the guards came to him.



Thringa moved swiftly . . . there was a blinding flash of light!



Thringa left the building unharmed. Soon he was scurrying through the narrow back streets of the city, his evil mind teeming with unanswered questions . . .



The TRIGAN EMPIRE

A plan by a group of patriotic citizens to replace the tyrannical emperor Argo by one of his triplet brothers has tragically misfired... the substitute emperor has been assassinated!

The news spread through Trigan City like a forest fire that Argo was dead and that the reign of terror was ended.



Even the statue of the founder of the Trigan Empire was not safe from their frenzy. The huge figure of the Emperor Trigo came crashing down.



The worst criminal elements in the city took charge. Hungry for loot, they stormed the Imperial Palace, trampling the guards underfoot... smashing and burning...



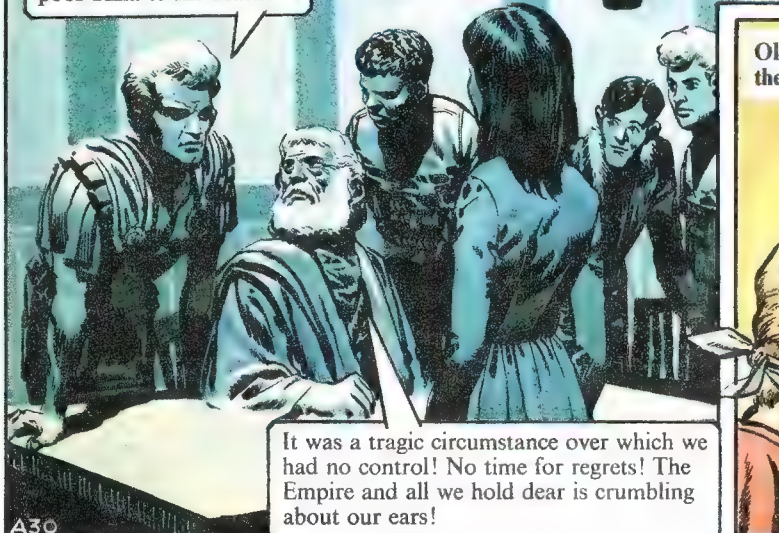
Chaos reigned!

From now on, we'll rule ourselves! No more taxes! No more work! Luxury for all!



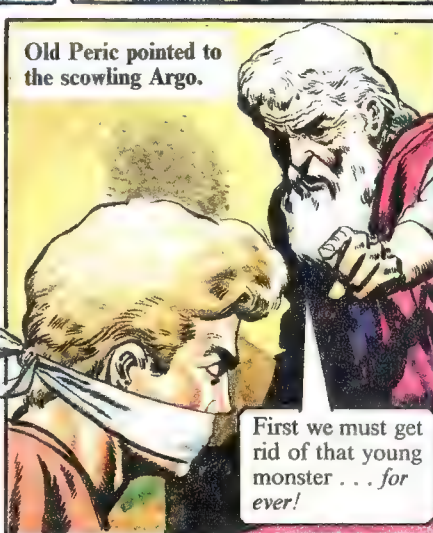
In Peric's house, the grim-faced conspirators were gathered... alarmed at the turn of events.

To think that we delivered poor Rilla to his death!



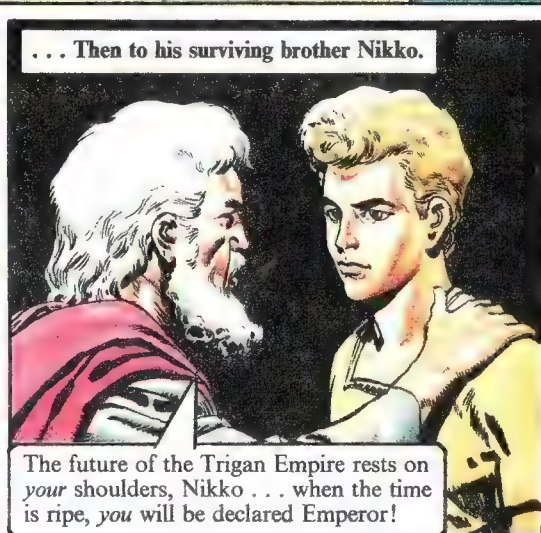
It was a tragic circumstance over which we had no control! No time for regrets! The Empire and all we hold dear is crumbling about our ears!

Old Peric pointed to the scowling Argo.



First we must get rid of that young monster... for ever!

... Then to his surviving brother Nikko.



The future of the Trigan Empire rests on your shoulders, Nikko... when the time is ripe, you will be declared Emperor!



All that night, the jubilant mobs roamed the stricken city . . . watched by the fiend from outer space who called himself Thringa.

I cannot believe that Argo is dead! . . . or that he slipped out of my power and ordered my arrest! Something . . . something happened . . .



Thringa directed his fantastic mind through time and space . . . till . . . at length . . .

Yes! He still lives! I see it all . . . through his eyes! . . .



By a feat of mental telepathy, the creature from outer space saw and heard everything that was taking place in Peric's house . . . through the mind of the captive Argo!

Janno! You will fly Argo to an island in the Great Ocean . . . and leave him . . . to live out his days in solitude!

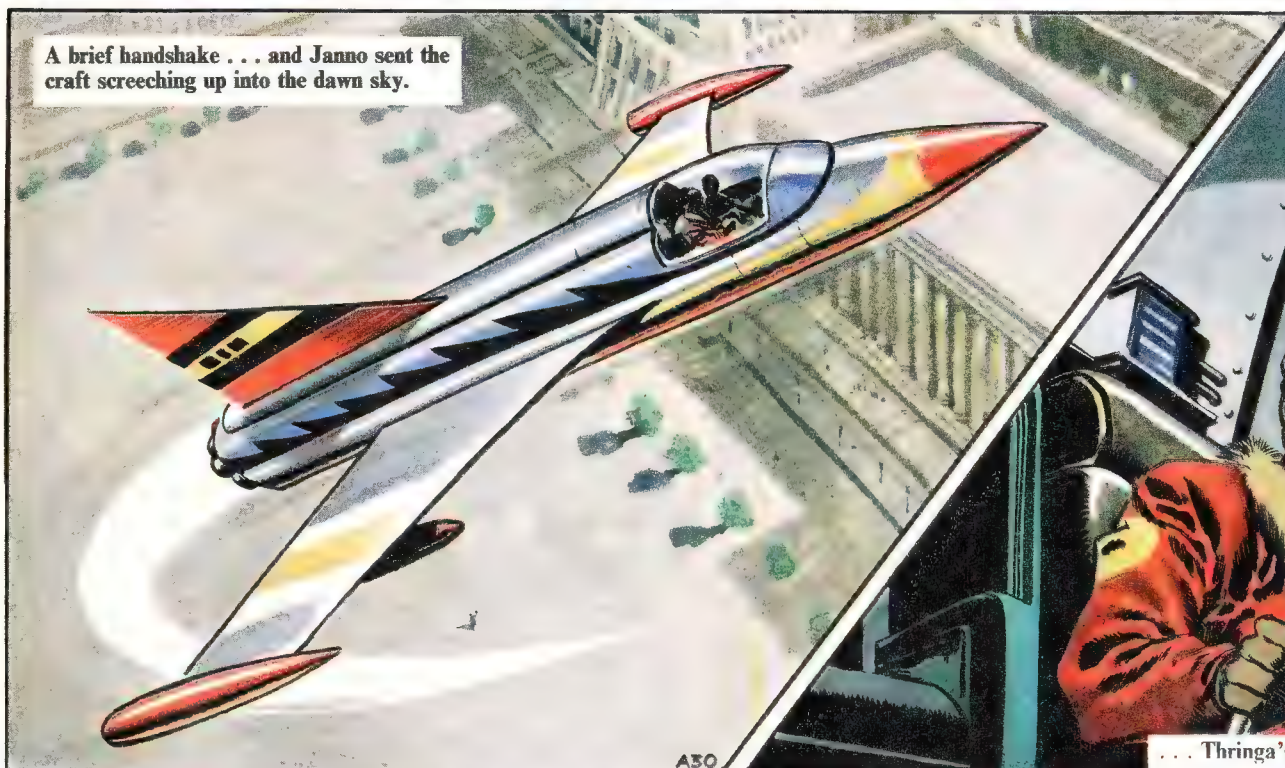


No detail of the conspirators' plans escaped Thringa!

As soon as the rioting has died down, and the people have regained their sanity, we will explain everything to them . . . and present them with their rightful emperor!



It was nearly dawn, as Janno and Keren carried the swathed figure of Argo to a waiting atmosphere craft . . .



A brief handshake . . . and Janno sent the craft screeching up into the dawn sky.



Janno set course for the distant ocean . . . and then . . .

. . . Thringa's evil, triumphant face appeared behind him!

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

To save the Trigan Empire from chaos, a group of patriotic citizens have kidnapped the tyrant Emperor Argo, with the intention of replacing him with his brother. Janno is flying Argo to secret banishment on an island in the Great Ocean . . . all unaware that he has another passenger . . .



Some sixth sense made Janno turn from the controls . . . and he looked into the triumphant face of the evil Thringa.

The mesmeric eyes of the creature from outer space bored into the young Trigan's.

Your mind is bending to my will . . . when I give the order, you will be entirely in my power . . .



Janno felt his will-power ebbing away. Summoning all his resolve, he reached for a pistol in the rack beside him . . . and aimed it at Thringa . . .

Never . . . never!

Fool! Do you think you can withstand a creature from the outer galaxy?

Cra-a-a-ackk! . . . a stunning force stabbed from Thringa's fingertips, and Janno collapsed over the controls!



Uuuuh . . . uuuuh . . .

High above flew another atmosphere craft of the Trigan air fleet. Its pilot saw the impending disaster.

With Janno's senseless form lying across the controls, the craft nosed over into a steep dive . . . down . . . down . . . down . . .



By the stars! . . . What's happened?

It was Roffa. Acting on his own initiative, he had decided to follow his comrade in case of a mishap during the long flight to the Great Ocean.



Pull out of that death-dive, Janno! . . . pull out!

A31



Thringa was no pilot, but his fantastic intelligence enabled him to bring the diving craft under some degree of control. Looking round, he saw Roffa's craft nearby.

Ten thousand curses! . . . We've been followed!



Now, my friend, you must deal with him!



Argo recognised the markings on the other craft, and reached for the controls.

Why . . . it's my old flying-teacher Roffa!

Then kill him . . . kill him!

Argo was known as the finest and most deadly fighting-pilot in the Trigan air fleet. His lips parted in a savage grin . . .

Prepare to meet your end, Roffa!

Too late for Roffa to take avoiding action. The other craft streaked round in a breathtaking turn . . . next instant, a line of shells exploded along his craft's hull!



Who shot at me? . . . who?

Singed by flames and choking with smoke, Roffa reached up for the release lever which would send him rocketing to safety from his doomed craft . . .

His question was answered! The other craft streaked close by . . . and he saw the mocking face of the tyrant Emperor of Trigan!

NEXT WEEK: MID-AIR MEETING

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

While being flown to banishment, the tyrant Emperor Argo has gained control of the atmosphere craft, with the aid of his evil tutor, Thringa. Now Argo has attacked and damaged the escorting craft, piloted by his flying-teacher, Roffa . . .

As the flames of his blazing craft closed about him, one thought dinned in Roffa's mind . . .

. . . That means he's overpowered Janno . . . and now he's free to bring further disaster to the Trigan Empire!

Without hesitation, Roffa brought his doomed craft round in a breathtaking turn . . . and headed straight for the other!

What does it matter if Janno and I perish . . . so long as the Empire lives?

So Argo is piloting that craft!

Argo saw his peril as the blazing inferno swept towards him. The frenzied cry of the evil Thringa dinned in his ears as he jerked at the controls . . .

Argo avoided collision, and the two craft passed within an arm's length of each other . . . but the scorching fan of flame did its work of destruction!

Do something! . . . Do something, you young fool! . . . We're going to collide!

Janno swam back through a sea of unconsciousness, choking from the acrid smoke. Instinctively, he reached for the safety release lever above his head . . .

We're afire!

Next instant, he was rocketed out into the clean air!



Hovering in safety, he watched the doomed craft begin its death dive.

So perishes the tyrant of Trigan . . . and his evil genius!

And then . . .



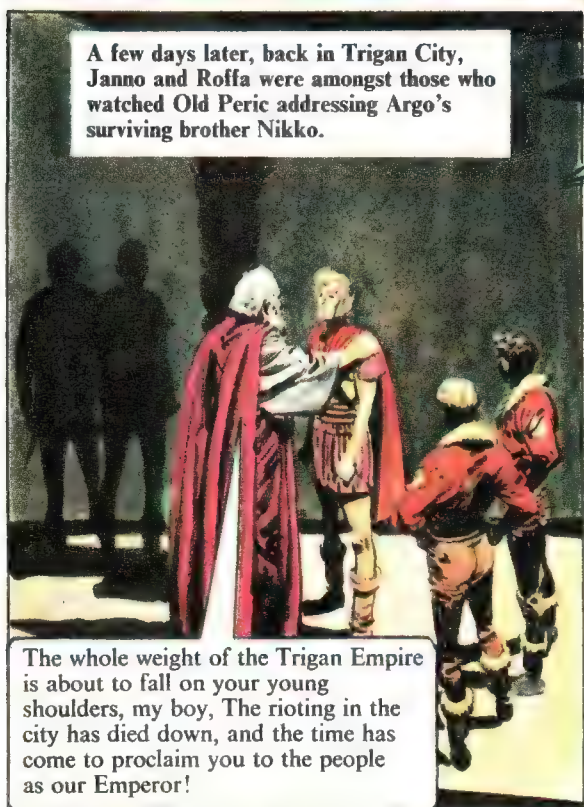
A hearty shout brought Janno's head whipping round.



Hey! . . . Janno!



Roffa! . . . By all the stars . . . what are you doing here?



A few days later, back in Trigan City, Janno and Roffa were amongst those who watched Old Peric addressing Argo's surviving brother Nikko.

The whole weight of the Trigan Empire is about to fall on your young shoulders, my boy, The rioting in the city has died down, and the time has come to proclaim you to the people as our Emperor!



Soon after, a party of befeathered warriors from far-off Daveli entered the city gates, bearing a litter.



The proclamation ceremony was taking place in the great square. Heedless of the angry cries all round them, the men of Daveli thrust their way to the fore.

How dare you interrupt the solemn rite of proclaiming the new Emperor of the Trigans?



Then came the stunning reply!

How can this be so? . . . In that litter is a man who calls himself the Emperor of the Trigans . . . **HIS NAME IS TRIGO!**

Next week: Janno, Keren and Roffa set out on an amazing new adventure.

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

Following much strife and turmoil, the Trigans are about to declare the late Emperor Trigo's surviving son Nikko the new ruler of the Trigan Empire when a party of savage warriors from the jungles of Daveli arrive at the city . . . They claim to have Trigo with them . . . *alive!*

One of the Daveli warriors drew back the awning of the litter, and disclosed the man lying there.



Behold!

By the stars! . . . it is indeed . . . Uncle Trigo!

The Trigan emperor opened his eyes and smiled weakly.



Trigo, my brother . . . you have returned from the dead!

Brag . . . it does me good to see your faithful countenance again.

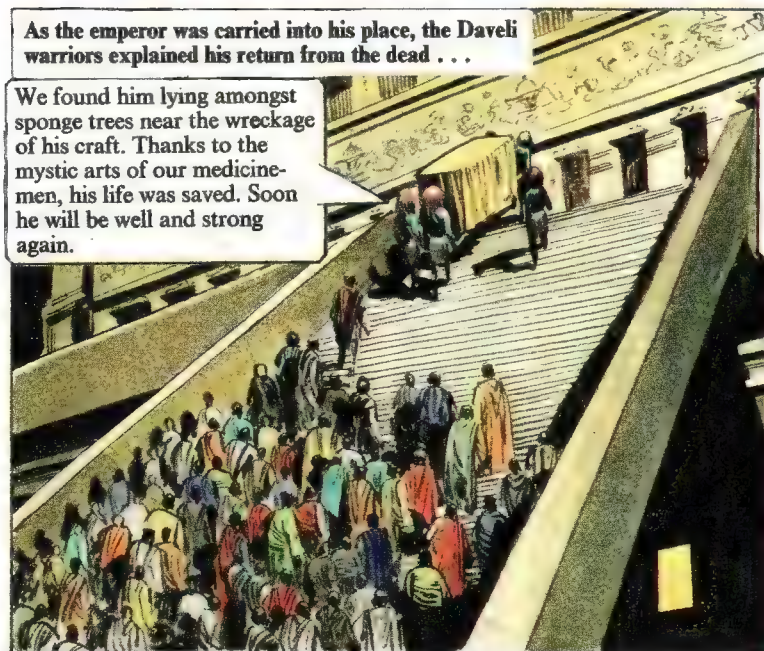
Then Trigo met the gaze of the tall youth standing near by, and his brows furrowed with puzzlement.



Can that be . . . Argo?

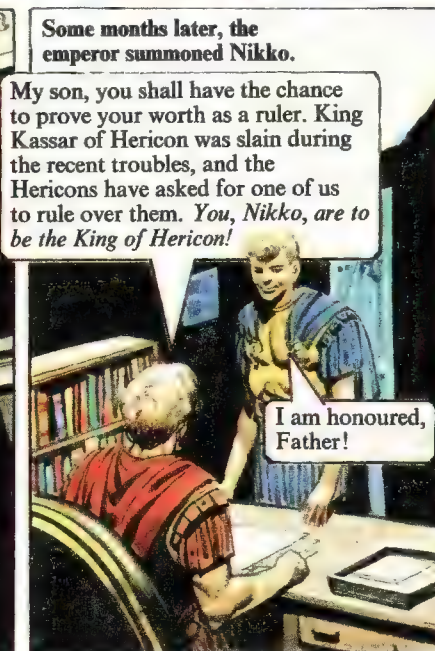
No! Argo has paid the penalty for his evil works. This is the survivor of the triplet sons born to you all those years ago, Trigo. His name is . . . *Nikko!*

As the emperor was carried into his place, the Daveli warriors explained his return from the dead . . .



We found him lying amongst sponge trees near the wreckage of his craft. Thanks to the mystic arts of our medicine-men, his life was saved. Soon he will be well and strong again.

Some months later, the emperor summoned Nikko.



My son, you shall have the chance to prove your worth as a ruler. King Kassar of Hericon was slain during the recent troubles, and the Hericons have asked for one of us to rule over them. *You, Nikko, are to be the King of Hericon!*

I am honoured, Father!

Trigo turned to those staunch comrades of the air fleet . . . Janno, Keren and Roffa.



You three officers will accompany my son on his journey to Hericon, and remain there as his aides.

Very good, Imperial Majesty!

Some days later, Nikko and his aides left Trigan City for the long journey to Hericon. They travelled in a land-craft.



For days they sped through the wilderness of Vorg, and into the trackless valleys and mountains beyond. And then . . . one day . . .



A massive storm ahead . . . we'd better take shelter in one of the gorges!

As Janno brought the craft into a steep-sided gorge, the skies seemed to split asunder, and lightning forked down.

And then!

Disaster!

Aaaaaah! . . . Look!
The whole mountainside
is coming down on us!

Watch it, Janno!

I can't control it
in this inferno!

Many hours later, Janno crawled out of the riven cockpit of the craft and looked about him.

By all the stars! . . . Look!

It's a cave-mouth! . . . Revealed
by the fall of rock!

Dragging their wounded companions,
Janno and Keren ventured into the
forbidding cavern beyond the gaping hole.

This is no natural cave . . .
it has been carved out of
the living rock by living
hands!

Yes! . . . But what
hands could have
performed such a
monstrous feat?

And then . . . in the soft sand of
the cavern floor . . . they saw . . .

Aaaaaah!
. . . Janno!

Oh . . . No! . . . NO!
It cannot be!

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

Prince Nikko of Trigan is on his way to Hericon with his comrades Janno, Keren and Roffa, when their craft is destroyed in a mighty storm which also tears a great hole in a mountainside. In the hollow mountain, they find a vast cavern . . . and the print of a giant foot . . .

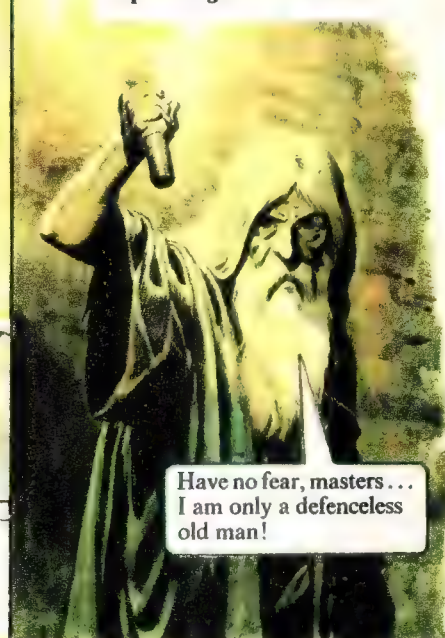
Roffa and the prince recovered consciousness, and the others pointed out their fantastic find. The four of them were examining the monster footprint when . . . they saw a light . . .



By the stars!

Who's there?

A quavering voice answered.



Have no fear, masters . . . I am only a defenceless old man!

Orgo told his story, and the four youths saw it in their imaginations. . . . "One day, long ago, I climbed down into a hole to rescue a straying gelf . . . and fell . . ."



Who are you?

And what is this nightmare place?

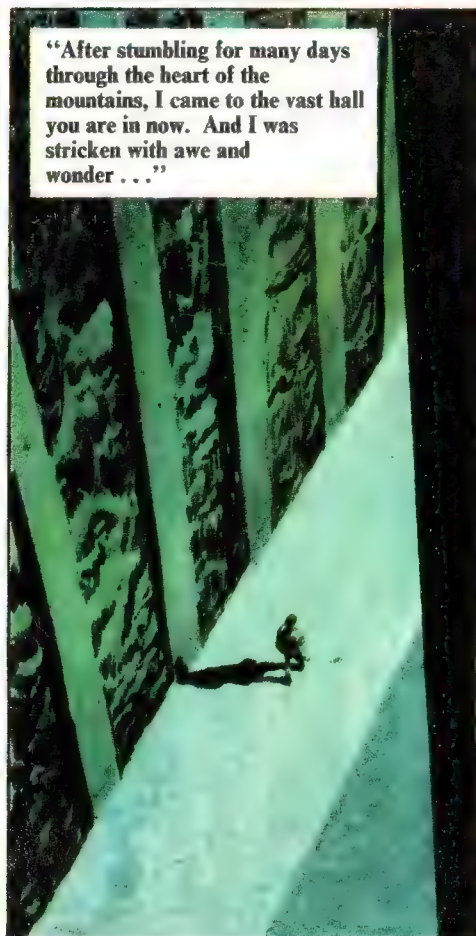
My name is Orgo, masters. And I am of the Trigan race like yourselves . . . once I watched over my father's gelf herd on the foothills of the mountains. . . .

"I landed heavily, but unharmed, on a bed of vegetation. There was no hope of climbing the sheer-sided pit . . . but I saw another way . . ."



Perhaps that is a way out . . .

"After stumbling for many days through the heart of the mountains, I came to the vast hall you are in now. And I was stricken with awe and wonder . . ."



Perhaps that is a way out . . .



AAAAAAAHH!

I have remained here ever since, with no hope of ever returning to the world outside. There is food and drink here in abundance, and I have grown almost to love my prison under the mountain.



Well, your imprisonment is over . . . you will be able to leave with us, Orgo.

Later, the old man produced a dish of succulent vegetables and spring-fresh water. As they ate and drank, they listened to their strange host.

You have seen the giant footprint? . . . It is my opinion that this underground world was carved out by a race of giants, now extinct.

There is nothing in recorded history of this planet to say that such people ever existed.

It's strange though . . . very strange! How else do you explain the footprint?

Picking up Prince Nikko with some difficulty, the old man laid him on the cart. Shocked and mystified, Janno crept after him.

What demon's work is this?

He followed his sinister quarry the vast length of the nightmare hall, till Orgo paused by a barred door.

HEH, HEH, HEH!

. . . What he saw haunted his dreams till his dying day!

See what I have brought you, my mighty friend! . . . Food!

Janno had drunk his fill, but eaten nothing. Later, when his comrades were asleep, he opened his eyes to hear a hissing voice!

Sleep your drugged sleep! Fools! . . . You will never leave here!

The old man entered with his unconscious victim. Some time later, Janno crept forward and peered within . . .

AAAAAAH! . . . NO! . . . NO!

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Prince Nikko was on his way to Hericon with his comrades Janno, Keren and Rofa, when a mighty storm tore a great hole in a mountainside. In the hollow mountain they met an old man, Orgo, who had been a prisoner there for many years. Treacherously, Orgo drugged the Trigans . . . and offered the unconscious Nikko to the thing he keeps chained up! But Janno was not drugged and . . .



A great hand reached out to take the inert figure of the Trigan Prince!

GNA-AAGH!

Eat, my mighty friend! . . . Eat!



Without hesitation, the watching Janno drew his pistol, took hasty aim . . . fired!

The projectile scored a scarlet furrow across the mighty hand, and the creature roared with animal fury.

Exerting its fantastic strength, the monster tore himself free of the imprisoning chains!

GA-A-A-AAGH!

AAAAAGH! . . . He's free



Janno threw himself sideways as the huge form passed over him. A length of swinging chain struck him . . . and he knew no more.

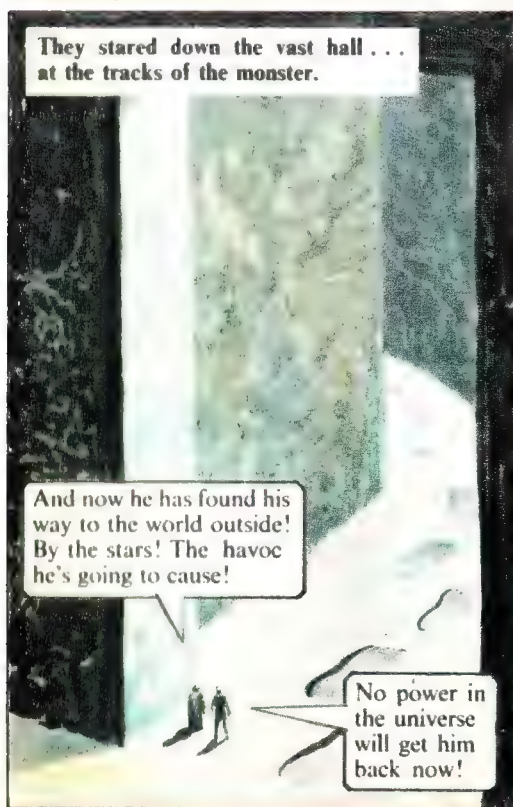
Some time later, he recovered consciousness and looked about him.

Orgo! . . .

The old man stirred and opened his eyes, fearfully . . .

Now! Speak, or it will be the worse for you! What is that fantastic creature?

He is the last of the vanished race of giants I told you about . . . I kept him in my power by feeding him some of the drugged vegetable I gave to your companions . . . without the drug he is a killer!



They stared down the vast hall . . . at the tracks of the monster.

And now he has found his way to the world outside! By the stars! The havoc he's going to cause!

No power in the universe will get him back now!



Janno seized the shrinking Orgo.

I'm going after him. You stay here and take care of my comrades. If a hair of their heads is harmed when I get back . . .

I . . . I will not harm them. . . .



Janno set off to climb out of the valley. He knew that there was a town nearby. And when he reached the heights and looked down . . .

Too late! . . . It's happening already!

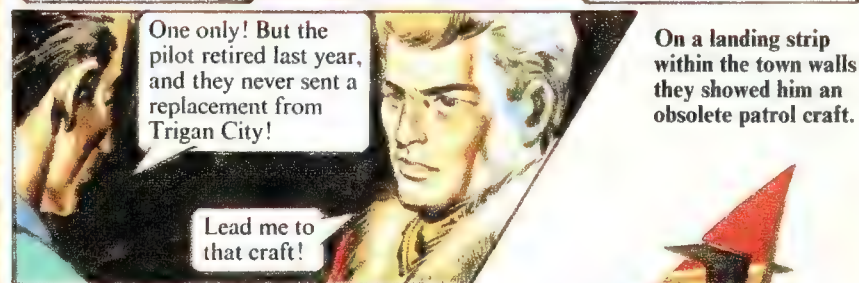


Down in the streets of the town below . . . Panic and chaos!

GNA-A-A-AGH!

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

Whilst journeying to Hericon, Janno and his comrades discover the secret of the hollow mountain, where the last survivor of a vanished race of giants is imprisoned. The monster escapes ... and runs amok in the nearby town ...





With a howl of fury, the creature picked up a massive boulder and hurled it at the oncoming craft.



Janno felt the shattering impact . . . the controls were almost torn from his grasp!

He managed to regain control, but the craft had suffered its death blow . . . there was not much time . . . he went in again, guns blazing . . .

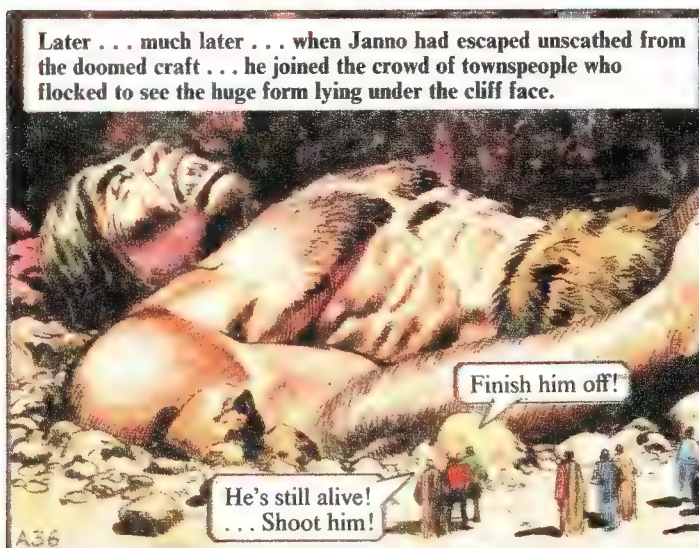


And then . . .

E-E-E-A-A-A-GH!



. . . it happened!



Later . . . much later . . . when Janno had escaped unscathed from the doomed craft . . . he joined the crowd of townspeople who flocked to see the huge form lying under the cliff face.

Finish him off!

He's still alive!
. . . Shoot him!



But . . . Janno's voice rang out.

No! . . . Hold your fire!

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

While journeying to Hericon, Janno and his comrades discover the secret of the Hollow Mountain where the last survivor of a vanished race of giants is imprisoned. The monster escapes and runs amok, but Janno manages to bring it crashing down from a clifftop . . . injured . . .

Watched by the astounded and terrified townspeople, Janno walked forward towards the groaning monster.



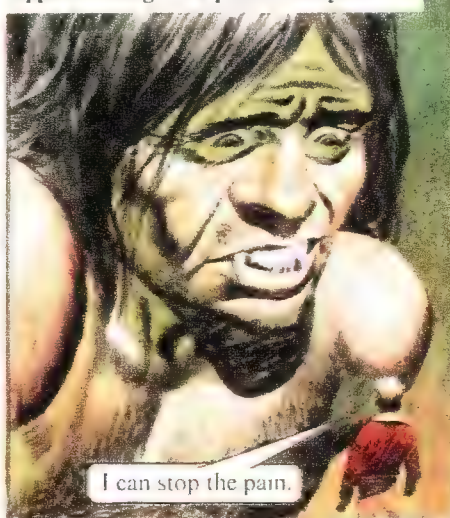
With pounding heart, he drew near the huddled creature.



Are you in great pain?

MMMM...MMM...

His fear gave way to a feeling of deep compassion when he saw the look of mute appeal in the giant's pain-filled eyes.

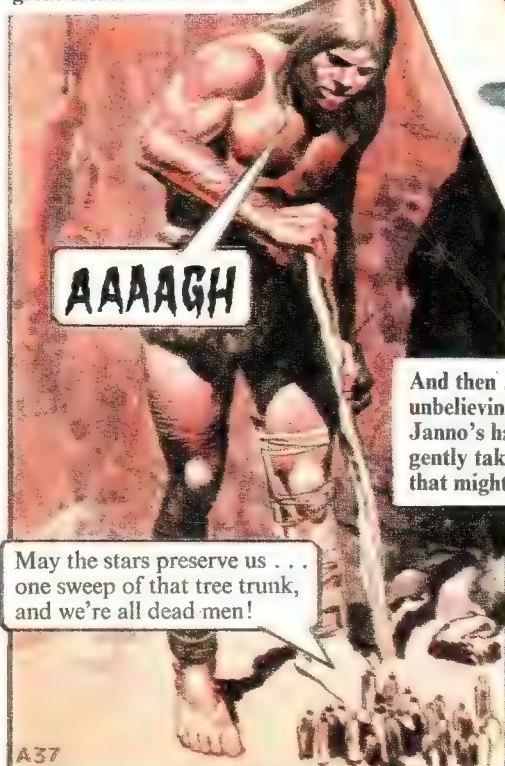


I can stop the pain.

Janno had a pain-killing drug in his emergency kit. He injected it into the creature's veins . . . and then set to work to fix splints on the broken leg.



Mastering their fears, the people assisted Janno in his work of mercy. Soon the leg was attended to, and the great creature was on his feet.



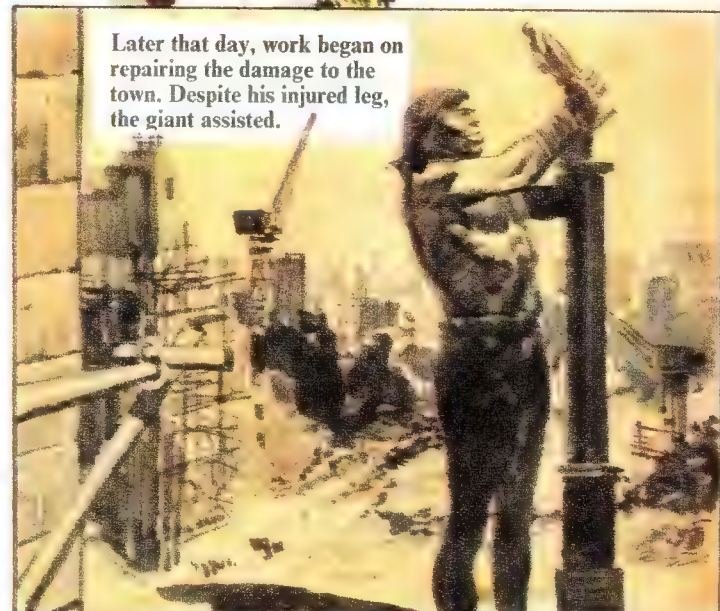
AAAAGH

And then . . . unbelievably . . . Janno's hand was gently taken in that mighty fist!

May the stars preserve us . . . one sweep of that tree trunk, and we're all dead men!



Later that day, work began on repairing the damage to the town. Despite his injured leg, the giant assisted.



No one was more astounded than old Orgo.



I never would have believed it! He was always like a wild animal!

Because you treated him as such . . . kept him drugged . . . in chains! In fact, he is just like one of us . . . only bigger, and more primitive!

Presently, they came to the shore of the great ocean.



We'll buy passage to Hericon on that ship at the quay!

A few days after this strange adventure, the four comrades set off to continue their long journey to Hericon.



If we had flown by atmosphere craft, we'd have been in Hericon days ago!

True enough, Nikko . . . but in this way you are seeing at close quarters the lands over which, one day, you will rule as Emperor.

The surly captain of the ship glanced shrewdly at the rich trappings of the four youths . . . and doubled the price for their journey.

To Hericon? . . . Twenty pieces each!

You drive a hard bargain, my friend . . . but . . . agreed!

When his passengers had gone below, the captain muttered to his mate.



Trigan officers, they are . . . we're in luck this time!

Heh! The nearest those young sprigs will get to Hericon will be the bottom of the great ocean!

They put to sea at sunset, and Janno was soon asleep. Some time later . . .



Janno woke with a start as they laid hands on him. He kicked out with both feet. One of his assailants toppled back, upsetting the lamp . . .

AAAAAAAH!

By all the demons! . . . we're afire!



The lamp crashed to the deck . . . scattering blazing oil everywhere!

NEXT WEEK: LEAP FOR LIFE

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

Whilst journeying to Hericon, Prince Nikko and his three comrades buy passages on a ship to cross the Great Ocean. During the night, some of the rascally crew creep in to overpower Janno ... and a lamp is knocked over in the scuffle ...



Within instants, the cabin was an inferno, as the blazing oil set fire to the dry timbers.

Aaaaaah! It's out of control! Fire! ... Fire!



In less time than it takes to tell, the ship was a floating torch!

The undisciplined crew fought each other as they lowered the only boat ... which toppled into the sea under the weight of their bodies.



Aaaaaah! Eeeeeeh!

Janno and his comrades reached the stern of the doomed ship unmolested.



Get this over the side ... it could be our only chance of survival!



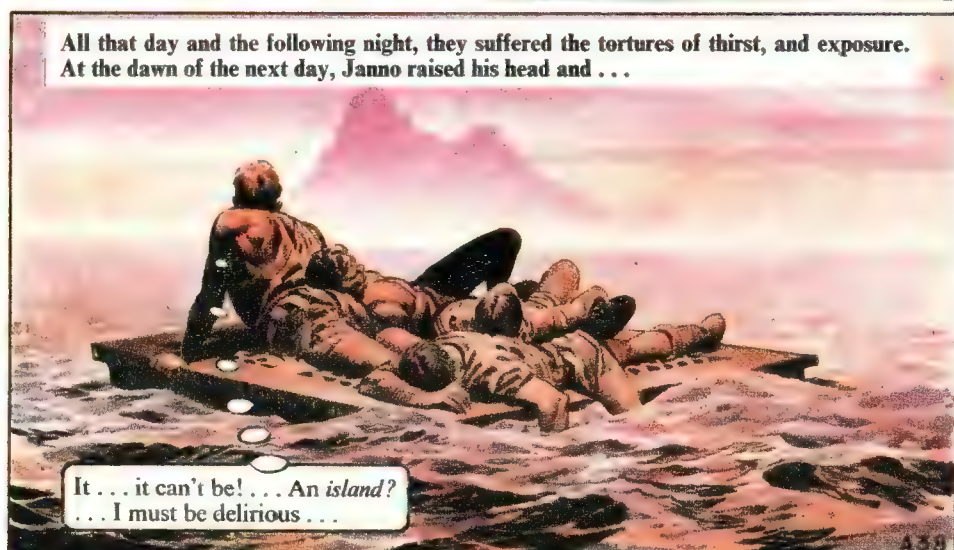
One by one, they plunged into the chill waters of the Great Ocean.



When day broke, there was no sign of the ship or its crew. The four Triganes were alone in the wild wastes of the ocean!

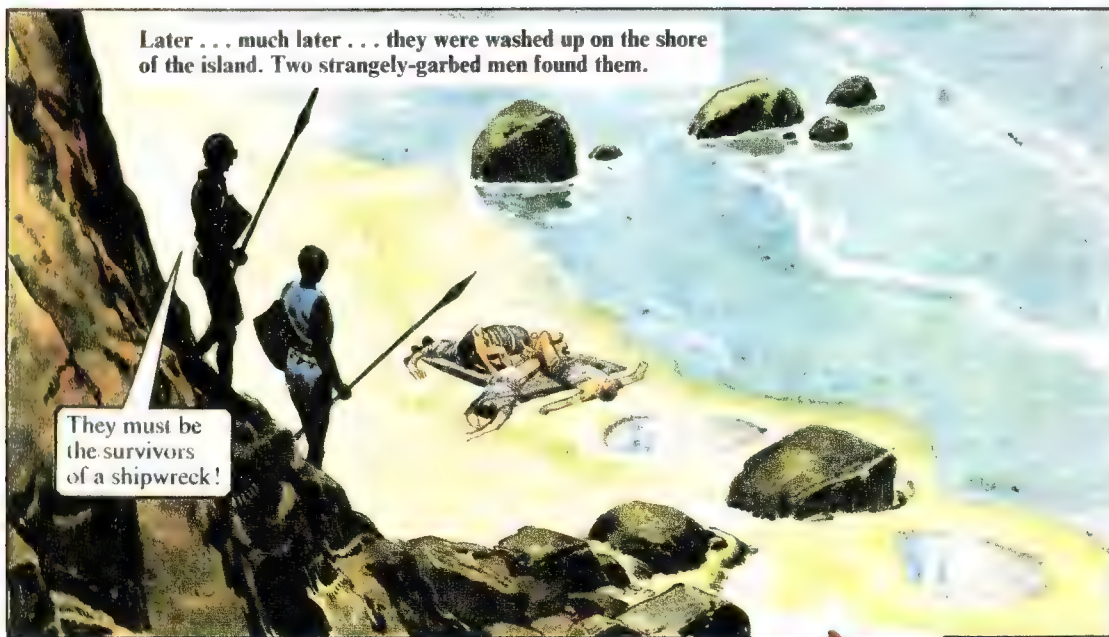
Lost! ... We're lost!

And no food or fresh water!



All that day and the following night, they suffered the tortures of thirst, and exposure. At the dawn of the next day, Janno raised his head and ...

It ... it can't be! ... An island? ... I must be delirious ...



Later . . . much later . . . they were washed up on the shore of the island. Two strangely-garbed men found them.

They must be the survivors of a shipwreck!



The Master will be highly pleased! Not for a long time has the ocean delivered up four such stalwart victims!



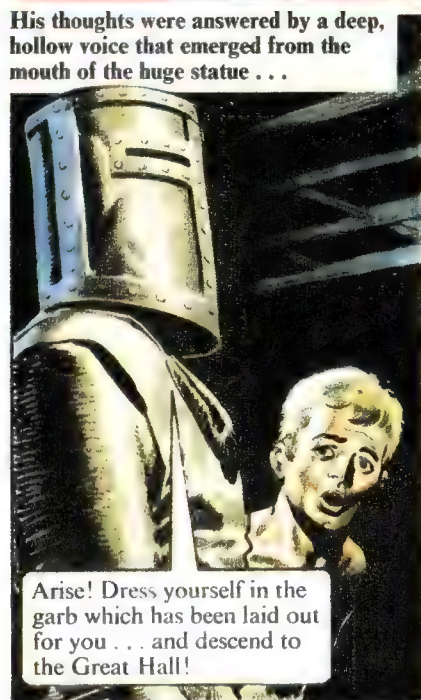
They were borne up a steep stairway to a vast building that topped the lofty peak of the strange island.



Janno recovered consciousness at nightfall, to find himself in a richly-furnished bedchamber.

What is this place? . . . Am I still alive? . . .

The figure at the end of the table rose to greet him . . . and it seemed to have a face filled with violence and evil!



His thoughts were answered by a deep, hollow voice that emerged from the mouth of the huge statue . . .

Arise! Dress yourself in the garb which has been laid out for you . . . and descend to the Great Hall!



He obeyed . . . and soon was descending a vast staircase leading down into a hall. Joyful shouts greeted him.

Janno!
The stars be thanked . . . you're safe!



Welcome and be seated! I am your host . . . my name is Otho!

A38

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

While journeying to Hericon, Prince Nikko and his three comrades are shipwrecked on a strange island. In the fantastic building on the highest peak of the island they meet their host, the sinister Otho...

Famished after their terrible ordeal, the four Trigans devoured everything that was set before them... and then...

You have eaten your fill, my friends?... Good!... Excellent!...



Their host's next words sent shocks of alarm through their veins!



It will be the last meal you will ever eat!

From the corner of his eye, Janno saw a group of brutish armed guards entering the hall... he tensed himself for action...



And then...



On your feet, Trigans!... prepare to fight for your lives!

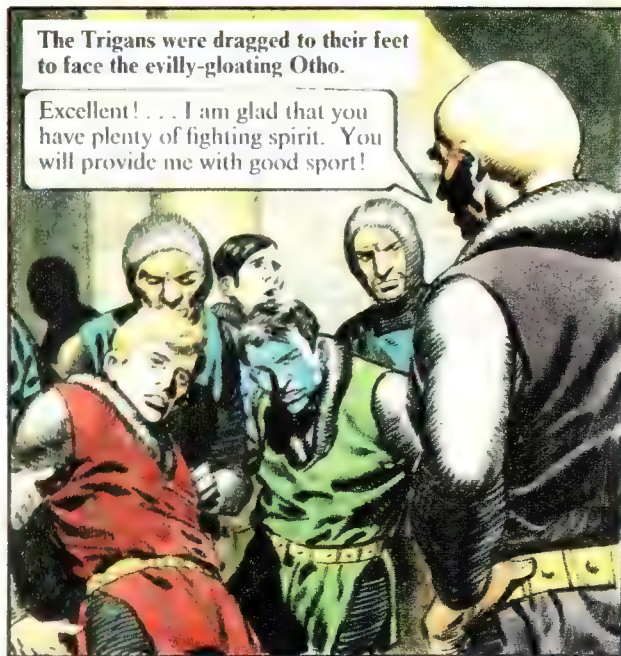
Prince Nikko struck the first blow.



The valiant four gave a good account of themselves, but it was a struggle that could have only one ending...

Strike with the flat of your sword blades!... don't kill them!





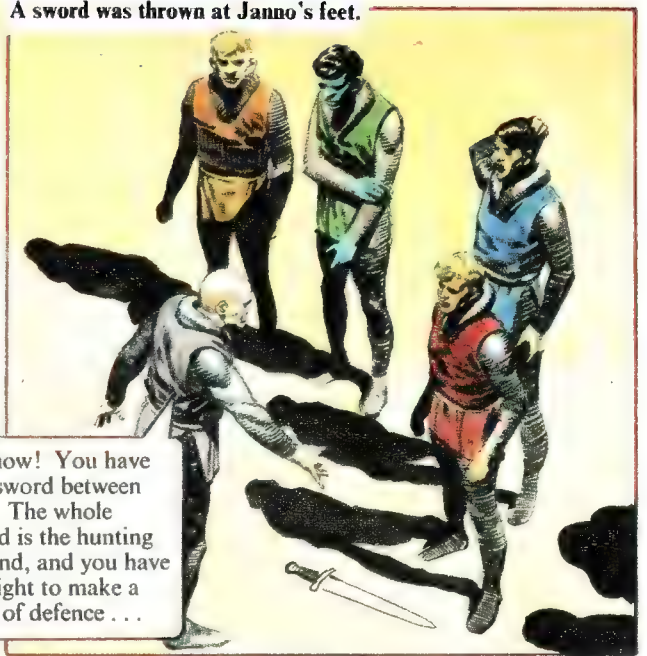
The Trigans were dragged to their feet to face the evilly-gloating Otho.

Excellent! . . . I am glad that you have plenty of fighting spirit. You will provide me with good sport!

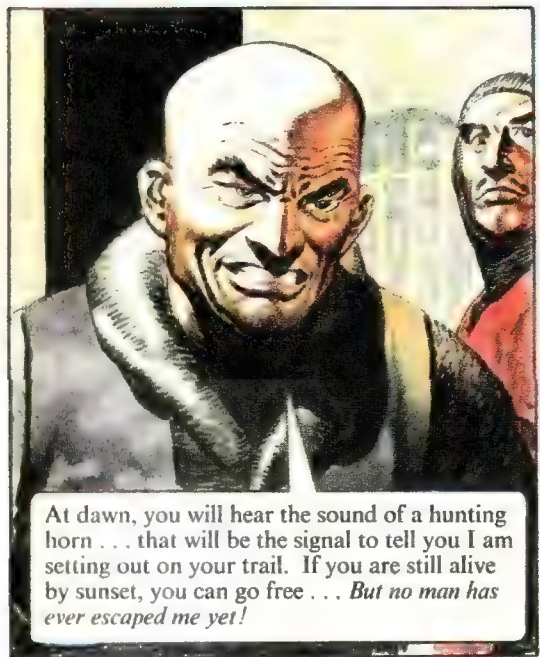


My whole life is devoted to the sport of hunting. The island teems with cunning and ferocious game, but I have found no animal that gives me better sport than man . . . so I am a hunter of men!

A sword was thrown at Janno's feet.



Go now! You have this sword between you. The whole island is the hunting ground, and you have all night to make a plan of defence . . .



At dawn, you will hear the sound of a hunting horn . . . that will be the signal to tell you I am setting out on your trail. If you are still alive by sunset, you can go free . . . But no man has ever escaped me yet!



And so the four set off in the darkness . . . and were soon scrambling over the thickly-wooded slopes of the island.

We haven't long . . . the night's more than half gone!



Then the spine-chilling notes of a great hunting horn rang out from the ramparts of Otho's castle.



And Otho set forth on the hunt . . . with him were four snarling Yallas . . . the deadly hunting-beasts of Elekton.

This is our only hope . . . we'll defend this tree till the end . . . and go down fighting like Trigans should!

It won't be long now!

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

While journeying to Hericon, Prince Nikko and his three comrades are shipwrecked on a strange island in the Great Ocean. The master of the island—the sinister Otho—means to hunt the four Trigans to their deaths. . . .

The wild baying of the Yallas rose to a blood-chilling crescendo as they picked up the scent of the fugitives.



YO-O-O-O-U-U-U-UHH!

From the dizzy height of their monster tree, the four Trigans heard it . . . and their hearts sank within them.



Yallas! . . . by the stars, the fiend is using Yallas!

Then we are lost! It only remains for us to die like Trigans!

The hunting-beasts led their master straight to the base of the tree.



They must be up there! . . . yes! I see them!

His gun belched flame . . .



The Trigans threw themselves prone on the broad branch, as the shells tore into the wood all round them!



When the firing slackened, they leapt to their feet . . . and hurled down their sharpened stakes!



One of Otho's brutish guards fell to a makeshift lance . . . and the sinister hunter leapt for cover.



Release the Yallas! . . . let them deal with the demons!

And so, the terrible hunting-beasts of Elekton were freed to deal with the prey . . .

The Trigans met the monsters with sword and lances.

Keep them back at all costs!

RA-A-A-AAAH!

A blow of a taloned paw sent Prince Nikko reeling back . . .

AAAAAAAH . . .

. . . to fall headlong . . .

. . . EEEEEEEEEEEH!

Moments later, Janno paused in his efforts . . . and looked down to see the Prince of Trigan sprawled senseless on a lower branch, with a Yalla about to dispatch him!

Nikko!

Without hesitation, Janno leapt for a trailing branch . . . and swung low . . .

He extended his booted feet to strike the Yalla and send it toppling to destruction . . . but an instant before impact the beast turned . . . !

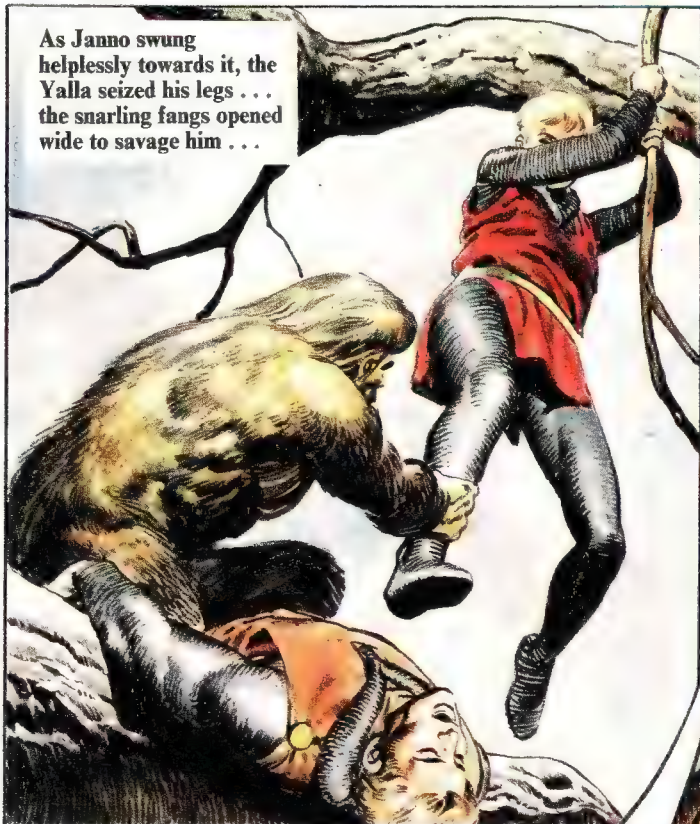
YO-O-O-O-U-U-HH!

. . . and he was being carried straight towards those gaping jaws!

NEXT WEEK: MORE TRIALS FOR THE TRAPPED TRIGANS!

While journeying to Hericon, Prince Nikko and his three comrades are shipwrecked on a strange island in the great ocean. The master of the island—the sinister Otho—means to hunt the four Trigans to their deaths. High in a massive tree, Janno is trying to rescue Nikko from a fierce Yalla . . .

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE



As Janno swung helplessly towards it, the Yalla seized his legs . . . the snarling fangs opened wide to savage him . . .



Janno raised up his stricken prince. To his utter relief, Nikko's eyes opened.

Nikko! . . . are you all right?

Yes . . . thank the stars . . .



When the sinister hunter had departed, the Trigans descended from the tree.

No use staying up there. If the fiend is returning with more men, we must make fresh defences!

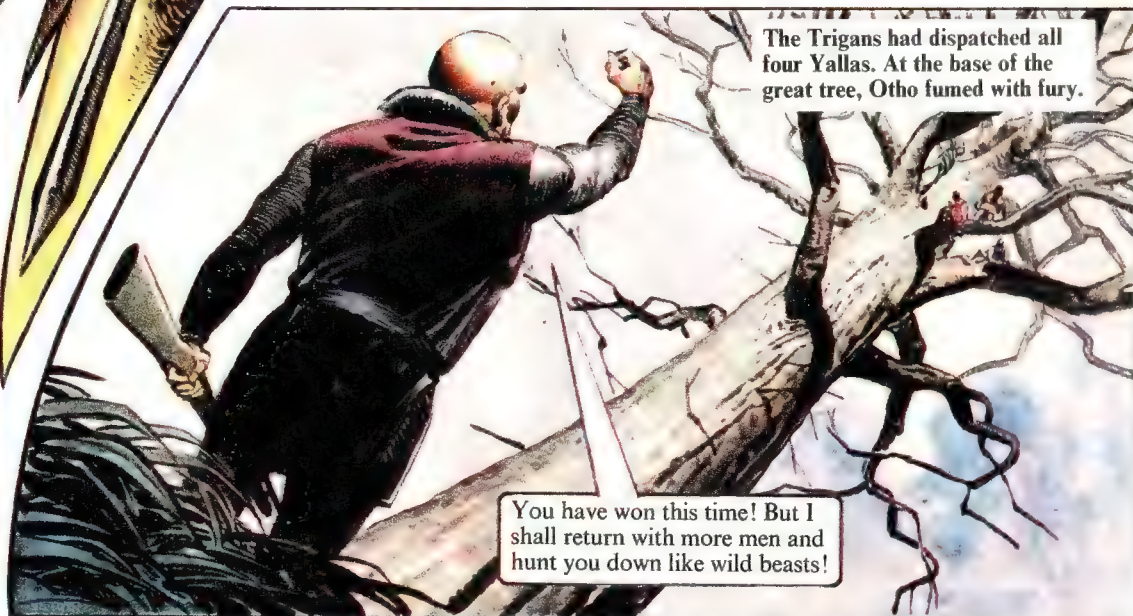
And we haven't much time!



Roffa saw it all from the branch above . . . he hurled one of the makeshift lances . . .

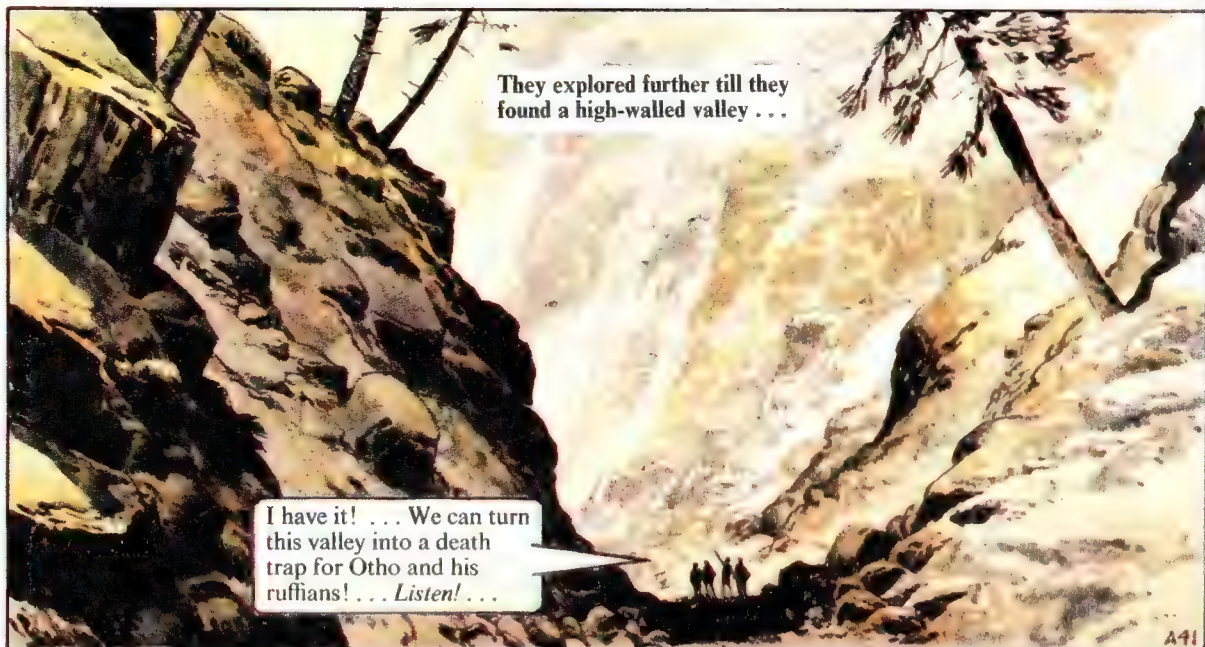


. . . and saved his comrades!



The Trigans had dispatched all four Yallas. At the base of the great tree, Otho fumed with fury.

You have won this time! But I shall return with more men and hunt you down like wild beasts!



They explored further till they found a high-walled valley . . .

I have it! . . . We can turn this valley into a death trap for Otho and his ruffians! . . . Listen! . . .

Acting on Janno's instructions, they worked swiftly. When the suns of Elekton were high in the sky, all was in readiness. Presently, Roffa signalled from the heights above the valley . . .

Get ready! . . . they come!

Otho walked cautiously into the valley, flanked by six of his brutish guards, all armed . . .

Keep your eyes open for trickery . . . these Trigrans are warlike and cunning!

And then . . . from the end of the valley . . .

Janno's giant bow sent a lance slashing towards its mark!

UUUUUUGH!

There he is! . . . shoot him!

And then . . . on the heights above . . .

. . . an avalanche came crashing down upon the hunters!

Otho and his surviving henchmen raced out of that fatal valley. Not till he was safely clear did the master of the strange island pause to scream back his terrible threat . . .

Again you have beaten me! But next time I shall return with a weapon of destruction that will blast you from the face of Elekton!

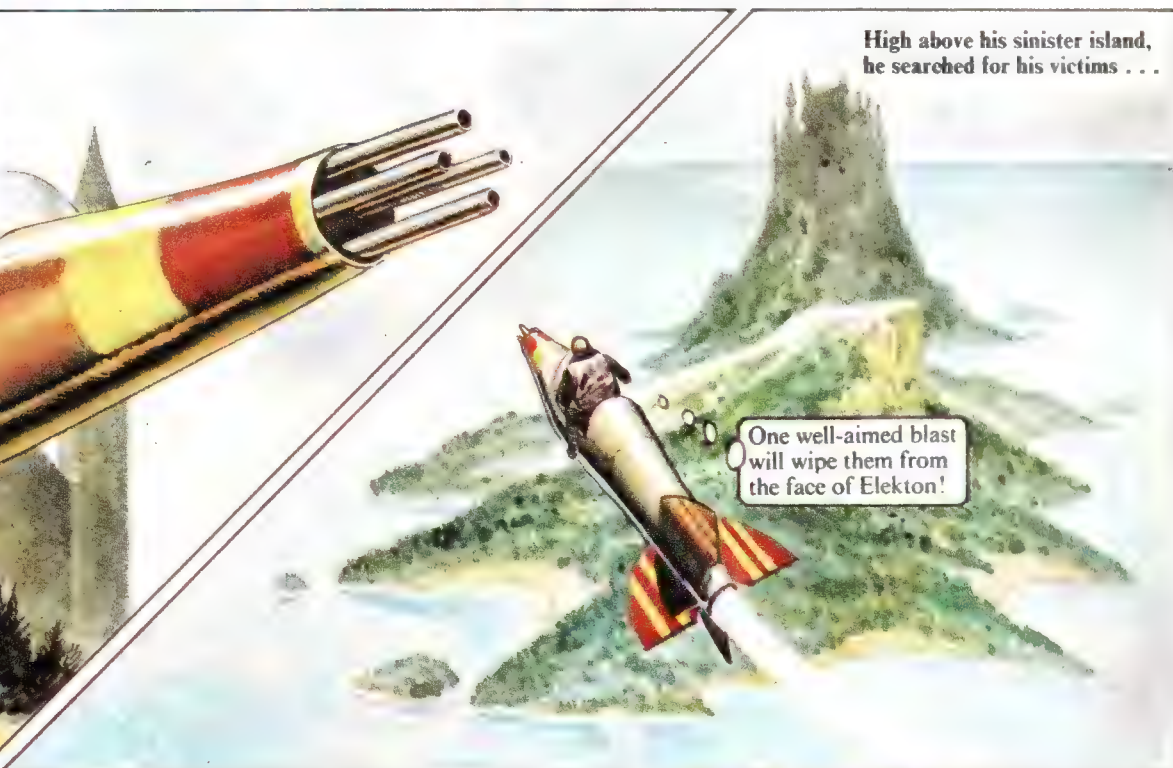
THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

While journeying to Hericon, Prince Nikko and his three comrades are shipwrecked on a strange island in the Great Ocean. The master of the island—the sinister Otho—means to hunt the four Trigans to their deaths, but they foil his first two attempts . . .

Some time later, Otho streaked out of a tunnel beneath his stronghold . . . astride a deadly-looking craft!



High above his sinister island, he searched for his victims . . .



One well-aimed blast will wipe them from the face of Elekton!

The four Trigans were hiding among the tumbled rocks on a beach.



There he is!

By the stars! The fiend is taking no chances this time!

If he sights us we're done for!

Yes, but there's a chance . . . just *one* chance . . .



Janno wriggled out of his tunic and began stuffing it with pebbles . . .

What's your plan?



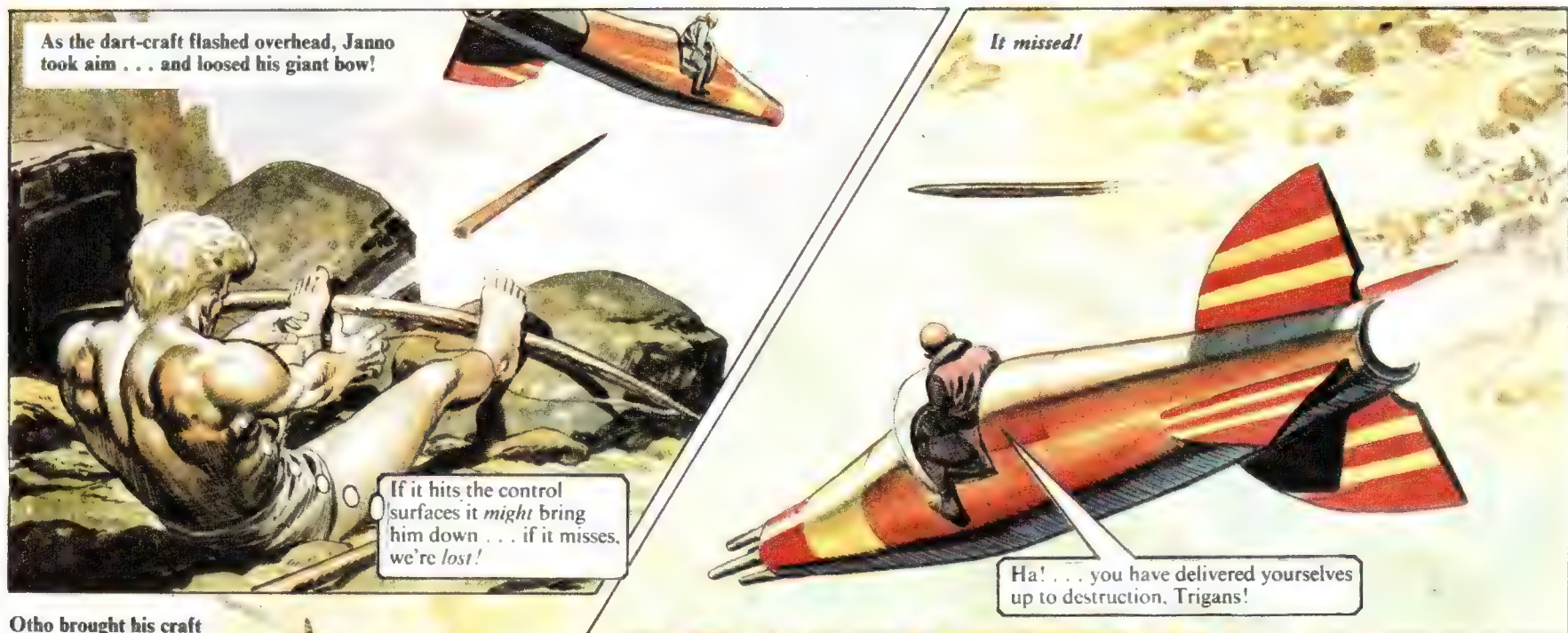
I'm making a dummy figure to lure him down . . . pass me a rock about the size of a head . . .

A few moments later, Otho saw . . . it!



One of the Trigans!

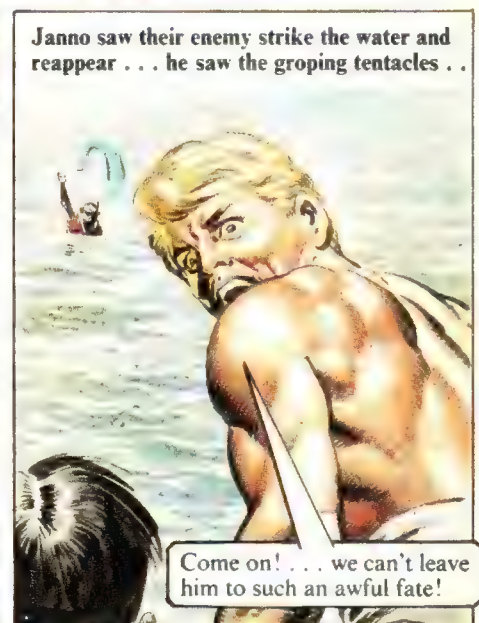
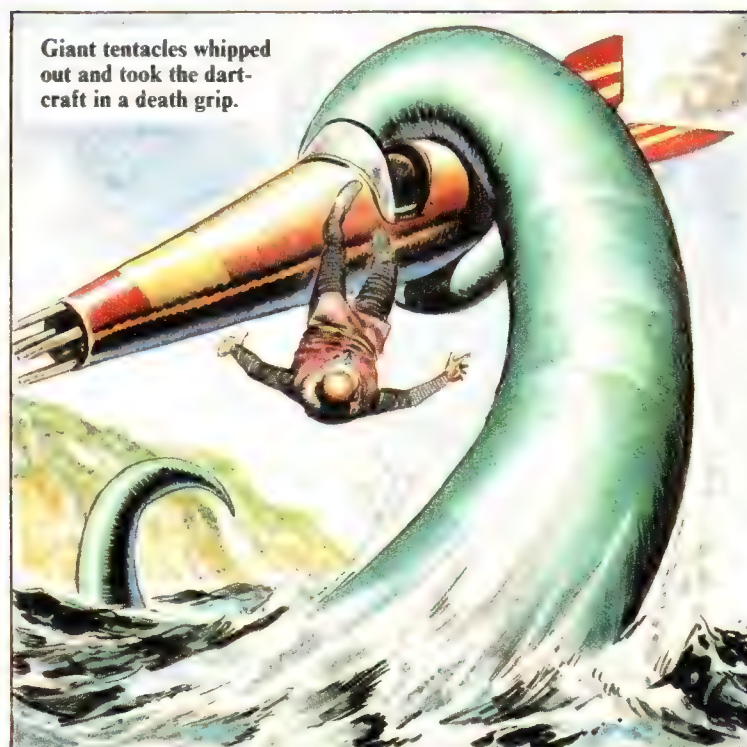
He came down in a screaming dive, cannons blasting!



Otho brought his craft round in a breathtaking turn and . . .



A42



NEXT WEEK: ESCAPE FROM A NIGHTMARE

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

While journeying to Hericon, Prince Nikko and his three comrades are shipwrecked on a strange island in the Great Ocean. They are hunted like wild animals by the master of the island—the sinister Otho. Then Otho himself falls prey to a sea monster . . .

Otho's wrist slipped from Janno's clutch, and with a despairing cry he was dragged into the depths.



AAAAAAAAAAH . . .

The Trigans were powerless to help . . .

He hunted men for sport . . . now he has met his fate!

Evil though he was, I would not have wished him such an end

There was no sign of Otho's evil guards when they reached the island's harbour

That craft will carry us to Hericon.

Let us get away before the guards learn what has happened.

Soon they were speeding away from the nightmare island.

There was transmitting gear aboard the craft, and a message was flashed across the Great Ocean . . .

Calling Hericon . . . calling Hericon . . . Prince Nikko of Trigan is on his way, and will arrive tomorrow . . .

The message was taken straight to the Council of Regents, who had ruled Hericon since the tragic death of King Kassar.

So, my friends . . . our new king is on his way . . . and you know what *that* means.

Nacha, chief regent of Hericon, eyed the circle of uneasy faces.

You, Trikk . . . have plundered the National Treasury. And you, Urga . . . have grown rich by taxing the poor. I, too, am guilty . . . we are *done for*!

He rose, silencing the babble of voices which greeted his statement.

We could cover up our tracks . . .

Men can be bribed to silence . . .

Fools! Fools! He's Trigo's son, isn't he? Do you think a vigorous young prince of the House of Trigan won't swiftly discover what's been happening here? . . . and execute the lot of us!

He clapped his hands . . . and a strange figure entered the council chamber.

Then we're lost!

Not so! There is a way out! . . . Enter, Zogg!

Zogg was one of the greatest scientists on Elekton.

All is ready, my Lord.

Good! Proceed with the experiment.

Zogg produced a robbis . . . a harmless wild animal of the planet Elekton . . .

My Lords, you will observe that this is a young Robbis . . . in excellent health, with dark brown hair and bright eyes . . . now . . . watch closely . . .

He touched a lever. A faint humming note emerged from the strange device . . . and something happened to the robbis!

By the stars . . . it has turned white!

White with age, my Lords! The creature has become senile!

And with this same scientific device, you can also turn a vigorous young man into a white-haired dotard?

Yes, yes, my Lord! That would be quite simple!

There is your answer, my friends! Our future king is going to become a doddering old man! . . . and anyone can outwit a senile king!

NEXT WEEK: THE HERICONS DEMAND JUSTICE.

Prince Nikko of Trigan is to become king of Hericon. The country is at present ruled by a Council of Regents under the Chief Regent, Nacha. These men are fearful that the new king will discover their crimes against the people of Hericon. They devise a fiendish plan to deal with Nikko . . .

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

Amidst great pomp, Nikko and his comrades stepped ashore at Hericon City . . . to be greeted by Nacha and the Council.

Your Highness! On behalf of the People of Hericon, I greet you!

I thank you!

Suddenly a poorly-clad figure burst through the guards and threw himself at Nikko's feet.

Highness! . . . Thank the stars you have come to save us!

From what, old one?

A finger was pointed accusingly at the Chief Regent and his accomplices.

Nacha and the Council! Ever since the death of good King Kassar, they have robbed and ill-treated the people of our land!

And then . . . more accusing voices!

My husband was thrown into prison for refusing to give all his wages to the tax collector.

My land was stolen from me by Nacha.

When Nacha spoke, his voice was smooth and assured.

Your Highness . . . surely you are not going to believe the babblings of these ignorant people?

Indeed no, Nacha . . . not without proof!

Nikko went on his way . . . leaving the Council members staring after him in alarm.

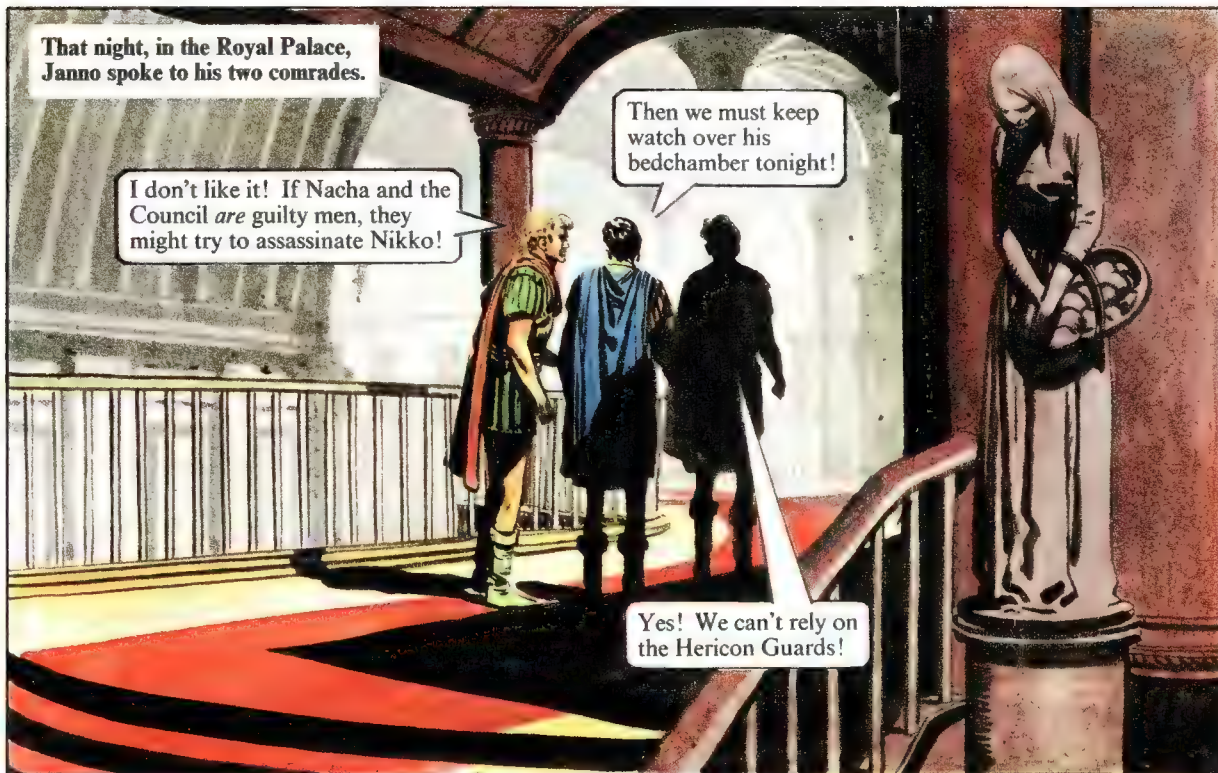
We are doomed!

Tomorrow he will learn everything!

Oh, no, he will not!

The matter is closed . . . until tomorrow! Tomorrow, you will call a meeting of the Council of Regents . . . and I shall require to see full details of how you have ruled this country since King Kassar's death!

Tonight, we strike! Zogg's device is hidden behind the mirror in Nikko's bedchamber. . . . Tonight, our fine young ruler will be turned into a doddering old fool!



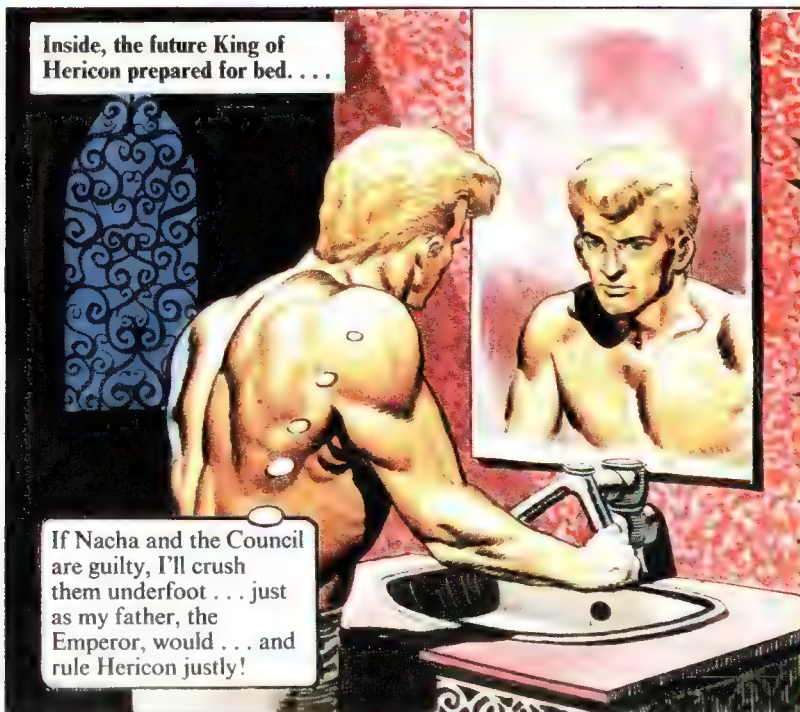
That night, in the Royal Palace, Janno spoke to his two comrades.

I don't like it! If Nacha and the Council are guilty men, they might try to assassinate Nikko!

Then we must keep watch over his bedchamber tonight!

Yes! We can't rely on the Hericon Guards!

And so, Keren kept the first watch on Nikko's door that night.



Inside, the future King of Hericon prepared for bed. . .

If Nacha and the Council are guilty, I'll crush them underfoot . . . just as my father, the Emperor, would . . . and rule Hericon justly!



And then . . .

AAAAAAAAAAAAH! . . . What . . . What's happening to me?



Out in the corridor, Keren heard the thud of a falling body. He rushed into the Chamber.

Your Highness!



He found himself looking down at . . . an old man!

No! . . . Oh, no!

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

Prince Nikko of Trigan is to become the King of Hericon, which has been ruled by a council of Regents under the chief Regent, Nacha. Fearful that the new king will discover their crimes against the people of Hericon, these men use a strange scientific device upon Nikko . . .

The Emperor Trigo was out hunting wild zargot on the plain of Vorg with his brother Brag . . .

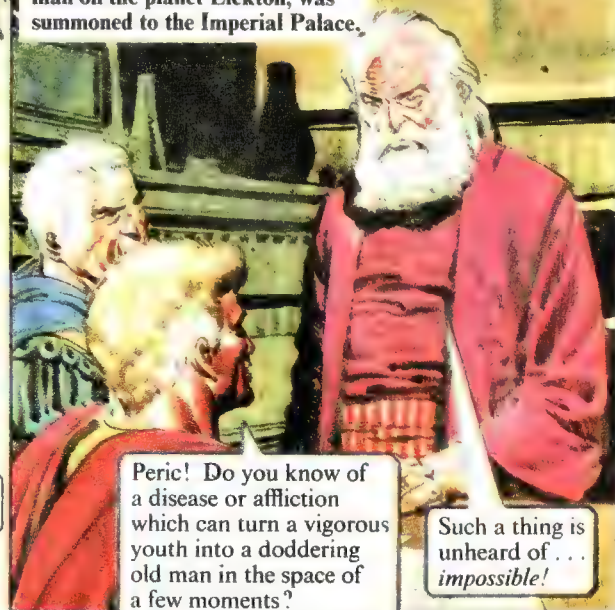


... When an atmosphere craft of the Air Fleet brought the fateful news.

Urgent! . . . From Hericon, Imperial Majesty!

It must be from Nikko, Brag . . . I hope he isn't having trouble with his new subjects!

Later, old Peric, the wisest man on the planet Elekton, was summoned to the Imperial Palace.



Peric! Do you know of a disease or affliction which can turn a vigorous youth into a doddering old man in the space of a few moments?

Such a thing is unheard of . . . impossible!

Trigo read the message.

Shocked, the Emperor dropped the message. Brag picked it up . . .

Nikko! . . . My Boy . . .

It . . . It's unbelievable!

No, it's from young Janno . . . he says . . . Oh, no! . . . No!

The following day, Peric landed in Hericon city, where he was met by Nikko's comrade, Janno.



Is it really true, then?

Yes, Peric! Summon up all your courage . . . you're going to need it!

It has happened to Nikko! Affairs of state prevent me from going to Hericon now, but you will journey there at once . . . examine my son . . . and cure him if you can!



Indeed, it took courage to gaze upon the feeble creature in the Royal Palace . . . and to realise that he was indeed Prince Nikko.

Nikko . . . Your Highness . . . don't you know me? . . . It's Peric.



The weary eyes gave no flicker of recognition.

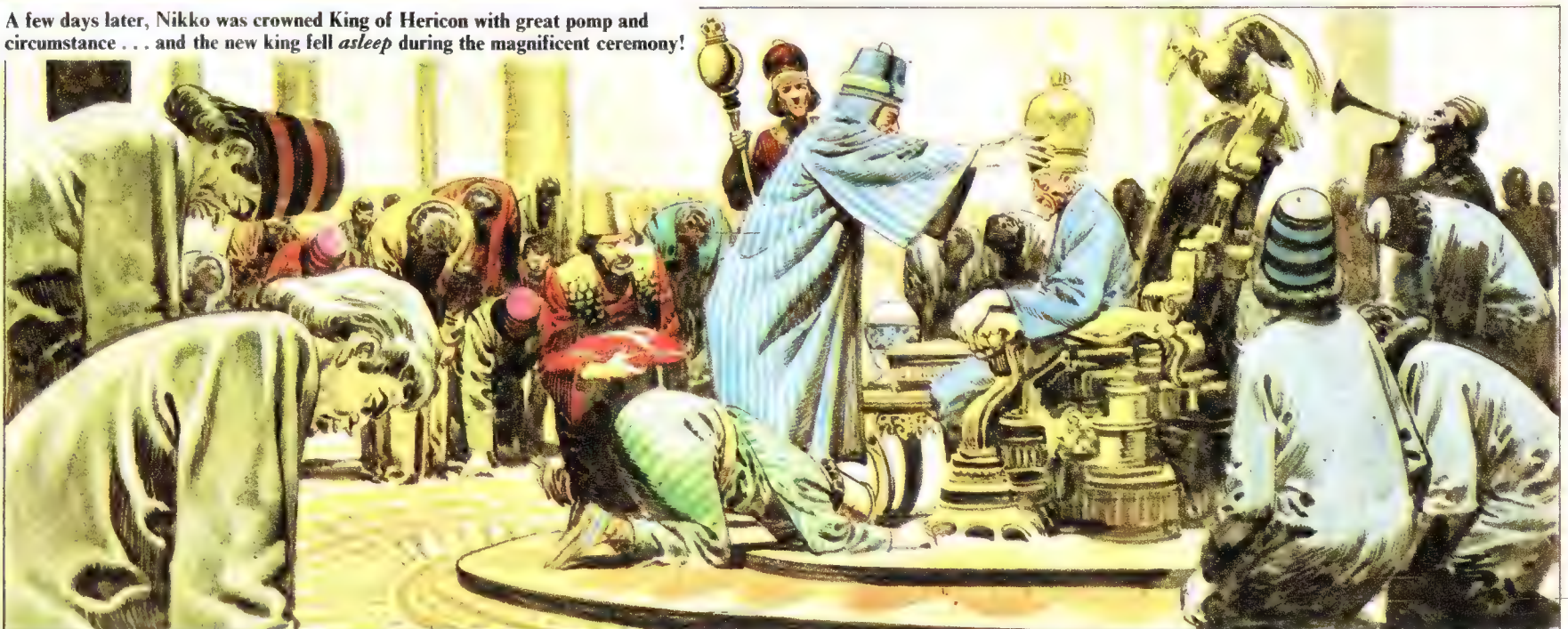
Do I know you? . . . Yes, I suppose I must . . . but I am so tired . . . so tired . . .



Peric thoroughly examined the stricken Nikko . . . and then . . .

I am baffled! It is beyond my knowledge! I can do . . . nothing!

A few days later, Nikko was crowned King of Hericon with great pomp and circumstance . . . and the new king fell *asleep* during the magnificent ceremony!



Nacha watched . . . triumphantly.



Now my friends and I can go on ruling just as we please . . . Nikko will be like a puppet in our hands!



The Chief Regent wasted no time . . .

Just sign this, your Majesty . . . see, I'll guide your hand . . . and then you can go back to sleep again!



And . . .

But . . . we've already paid our taxes for the year, sir!

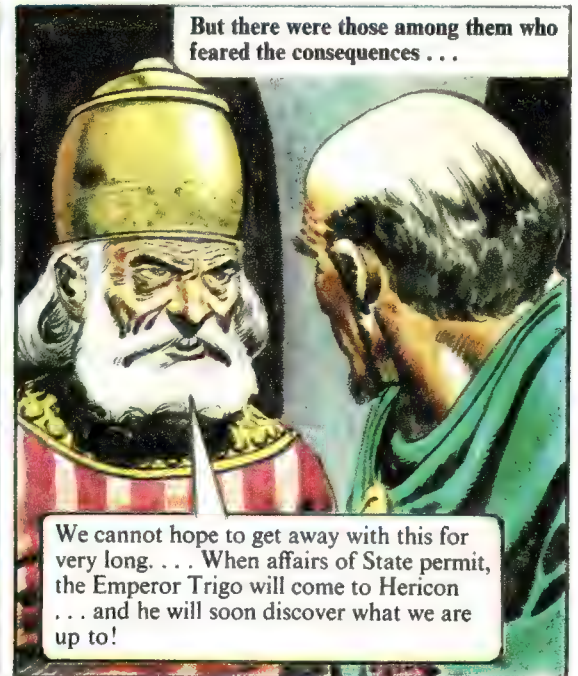
You will pay them again! . . . By order of the King!

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

Prince Nikko of Trigan has been crowned King of Hericon, but he is turned into a doddering old man, at the orders of the evil Nacha and the Council of Regents. Now Nacha and his cronies are free to rule Hericon as they like . . .



In the days that followed, money and valuables extorted from the suffering people of Hericon went into the Royal Treasury. Nacha and the Council watched in triumph . . .



But there were those among them who feared the consequences . . .

We cannot hope to get away with this for very long. . . . When affairs of State permit, the Emperor Trigo will come to Hericon . . . and he will soon discover what we are up to!

Not so Nacha . . . intoxicated with greed and power, he feared no man, not even the Trigan Emperor!



Let him come! What we did to the son, we can also do to the father.



One morning, Janno, Keren and Roffa called to see their stricken friend Nikko.

No admittance!

But . . . we are the King's Personal Aides!



From now on, no one enters His Majesty's apartments without a written order from Lord Nacha!

Inside, the pathetic figure of the King of Hericon was hunched short-sightedly over State Papers.



I find this . . . all very tiring . . .

Never mind, Your Majesty. Soon you will be able to go back to sleep again



What's he signing now, Nacha?

A proclamation appointing me in command of the Hericon Air Fleet. I intend to disband the Fleet, sell the craft and pocket the money!

Janno and his comrades left the palace with uneasy thoughts teeming in their minds.

So! Nikko is now practically a prisoner of Nacha and the Council!

And they're the Masters of Hericon!

The people are being robbed and ill-treated unmercifully!

Janno knew what had to be done.



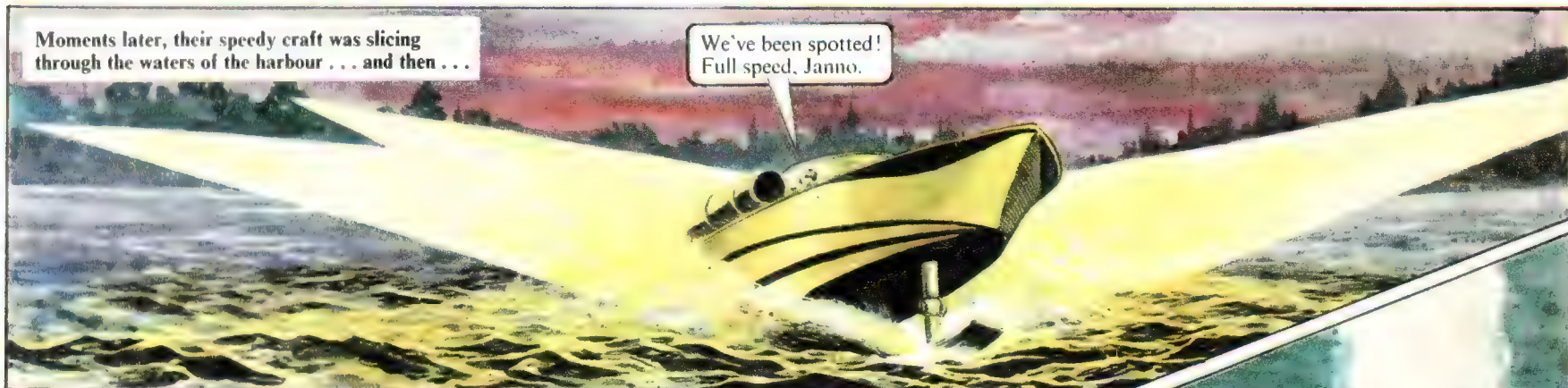
We must return to Trigan and tell the Emperor what's happening here!

Yes, but we'd better leave stealthily . . . Nacha will prevent us if he can!



At dawn the next day, the four Trigans stole down to the waterfront, where their craft still lay.

No guards in sight . . . we can slip away unseen.



Moments later, their speedy craft was slicing through the waters of the harbour . . . and then . . .

We've been spotted! Full speed, Janno.



They were caught in a merciless crossfire.

We're done for!

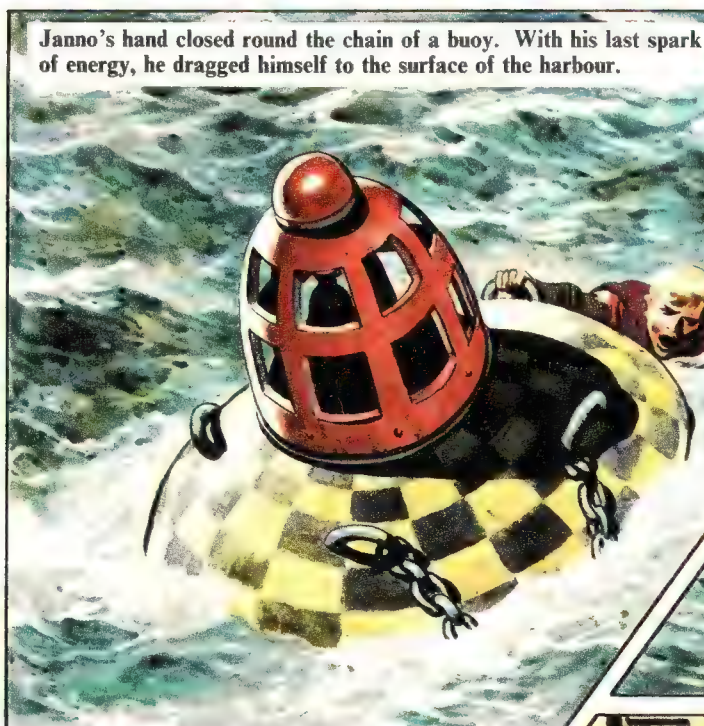
A projectile landed squarely in the control cabin.

Janno felt the chill waters of the harbour close over his head. He plunged deep . . . and felt his senses slip away from him.

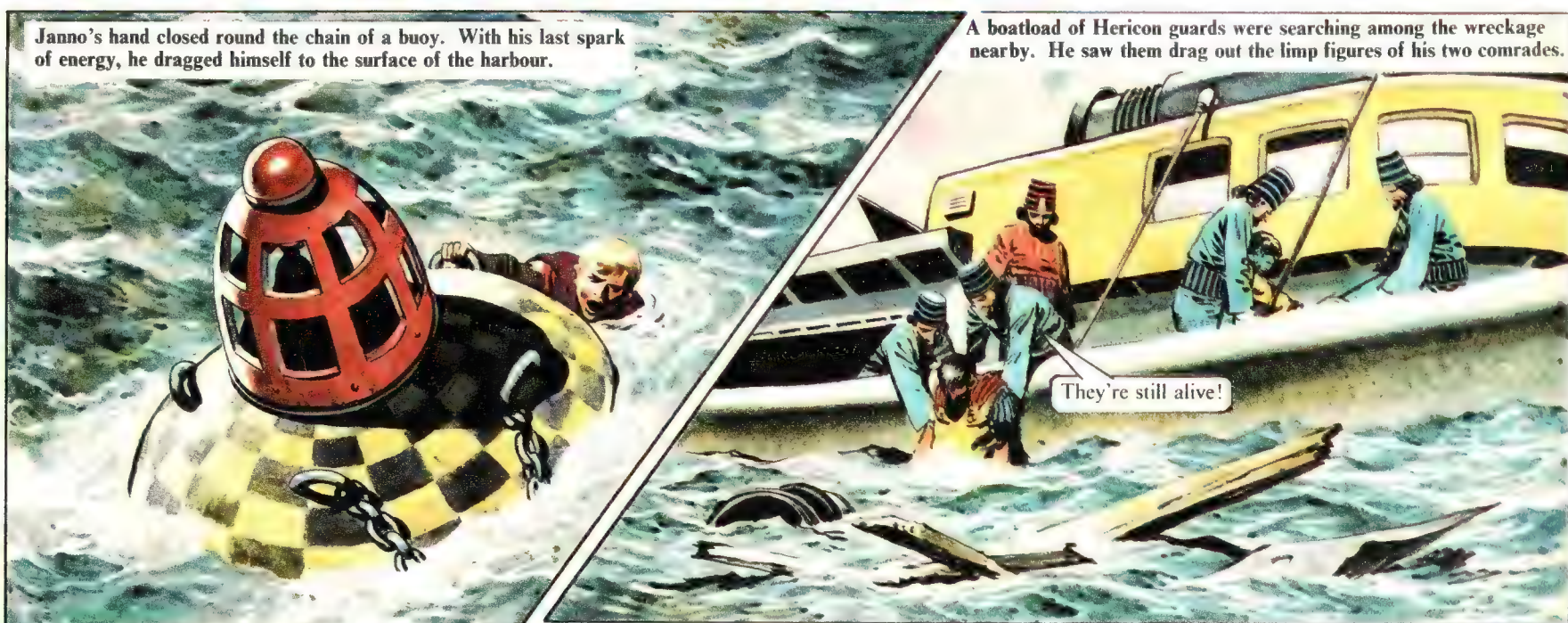
THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

The newly-crowned King Nikko of Hericon has been turned into a doddering old man, by a strange device, at the order of the evil Nacha and the Council of Regents. Janno, Keren and Roffa try to escape to Trigan, but their craft is fired on and sunk . . .

Janno's hand closed round the chain of a buoy. With his last spark of energy, he dragged himself to the surface of the harbour.



A boatload of Hericon guards were searching among the wreckage nearby. He saw them drag out the limp figures of his two comrades.



What about the third Trigan?

His body has probably been swept out to sea. We'll search towards the harbour mouth . . . but there's not much hope for the brat!



Later, after a fruitless search for Janno, they took their dazed prisoners into the presence of Nacha and the Council . . .

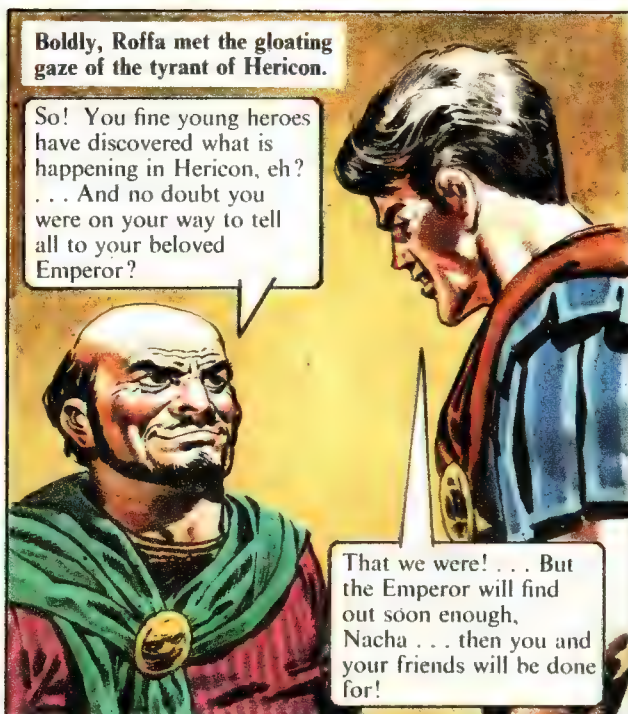
We caught them attempting to leave the city, my Lord. The third one was drowned.



Excellent . . . Excellent!

Boldly, Roffa met the gloating gaze of the tyrant of Hericon.

So! You fine young heroes have discovered what is happening in Hericon, eh? . . . And no doubt you were on your way to tell all to your beloved Emperor?



That we were! . . . But the Emperor will find out soon enough, Nacha . . . then you and your friends will be done for!

A cowardly blow sent him sprawling to the floor.

I could kill you both now, but I have a better plan! . . .



Nacha ordered Zogg's infernal machine to be brought.



I have a pleasant task for you, Zogg! You will subject these two interfering brats to the same treatment you meted out to their master!

Keren watched in growing alarm as his bound comrade was thrust before the device.



Moments later, Roffa was an old man!



Keren swiftly suffered the same fate . . . and then . . .

Take them away! These old dotards will not give us any more trouble! Heh, Heh!



Meanwhile, Peric was eating his morning meal on the terrace of the house where he was staying. He heard a rustle of foliage . . . and saw the face of his young friend.

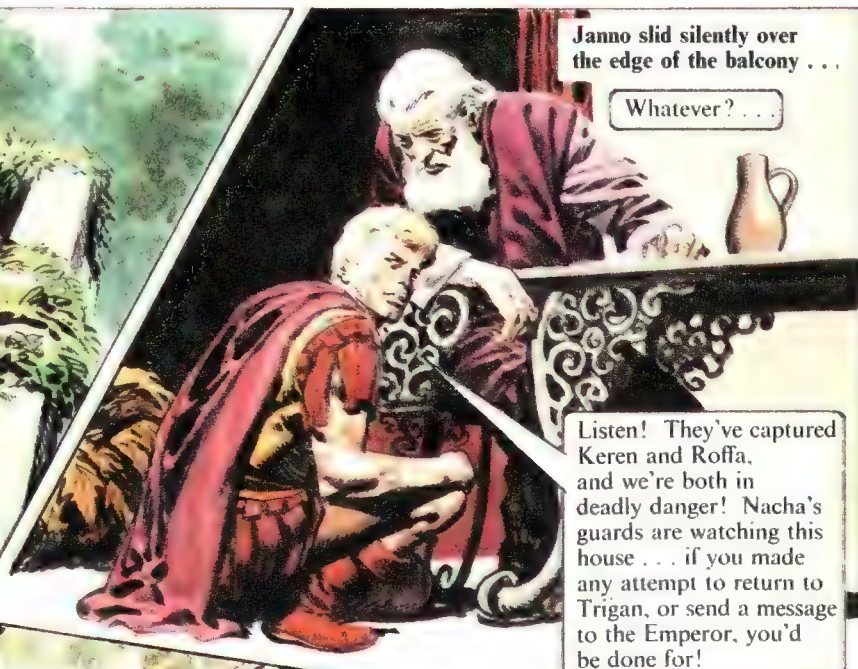


Why! . . . It's Janno!

Shhhh! . . .

Janno slid silently over the edge of the balcony . . .

Whatever? . . .



Listen! They've captured Keren and Roffa, and we're both in deadly danger! Nacha's guards are watching this house . . . if you made any attempt to return to Trigan, or send a message to the Emperor, you'd be done for!

And then . . . the thunder of knocking on the street door below!



Open up! In the name of the King!

Break it down!

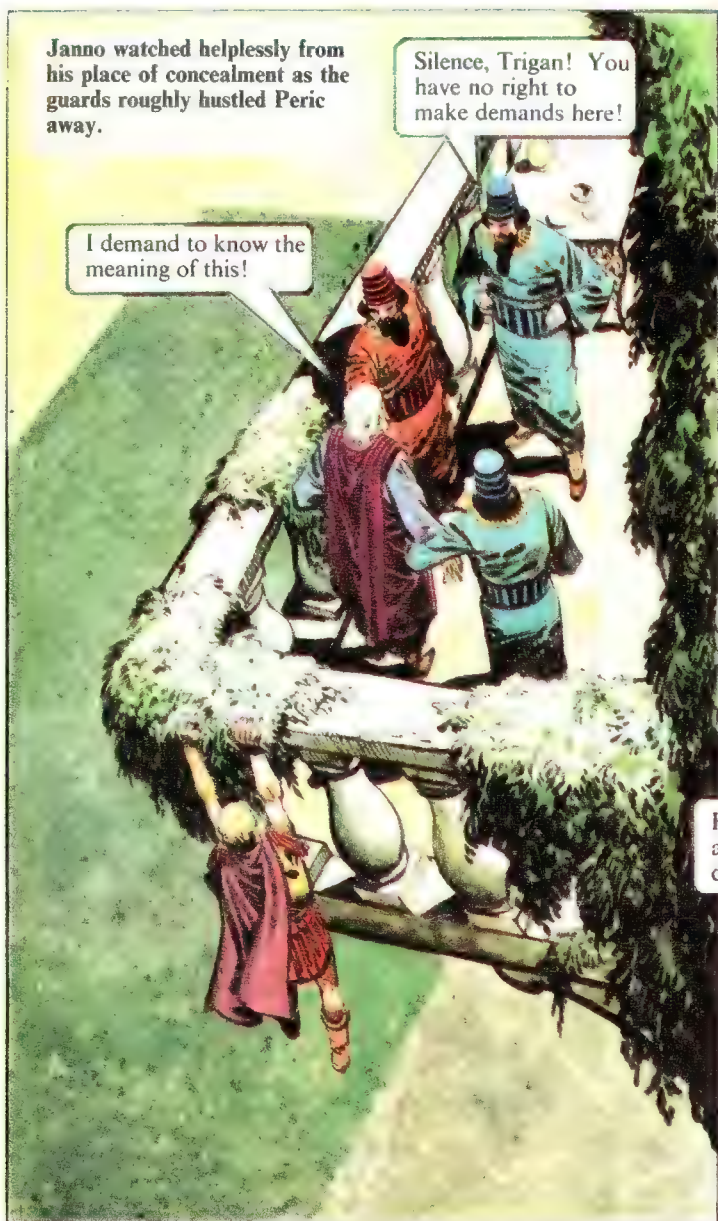
Nacha's guards burst in. They found old Peric alone on the terrace.

You are under arrest!



With the help of a fiendish scientific device, the evil Nacha has made himself master of the Kingdom of Hericon. Young Janno has gone to warn his fellow Trigan, the scientific Peric, of their danger. But Nacha's guards come to arrest Peric.

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE



Janno watched helplessly from his place of concealment as the guards roughly hustled Peric away.

Silence, Trigan! You have no right to make demands here!

I demand to know the meaning of this!



And then . . . a harsh shout made Janno look down!

Hey! . . . What are you doing there?

Without a moment's hesitation, Janno let himself drop!



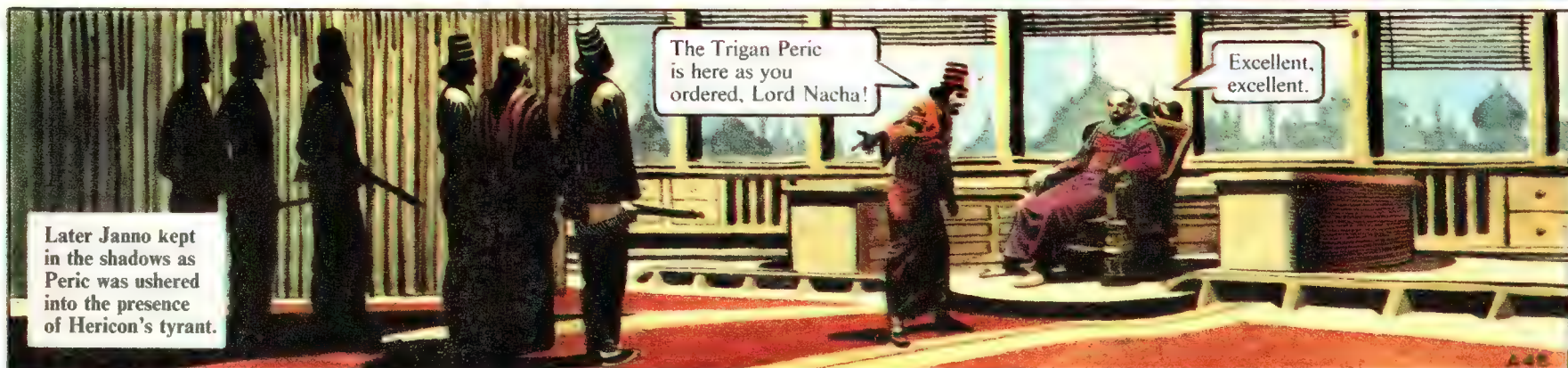
He landed squarely on the guard and dashed him, senseless, to the ground!

Not much time for what I have to do!



When the prisoner and his escort came out, Janno joined the party, clad in the trappings of one of Nacha's men!

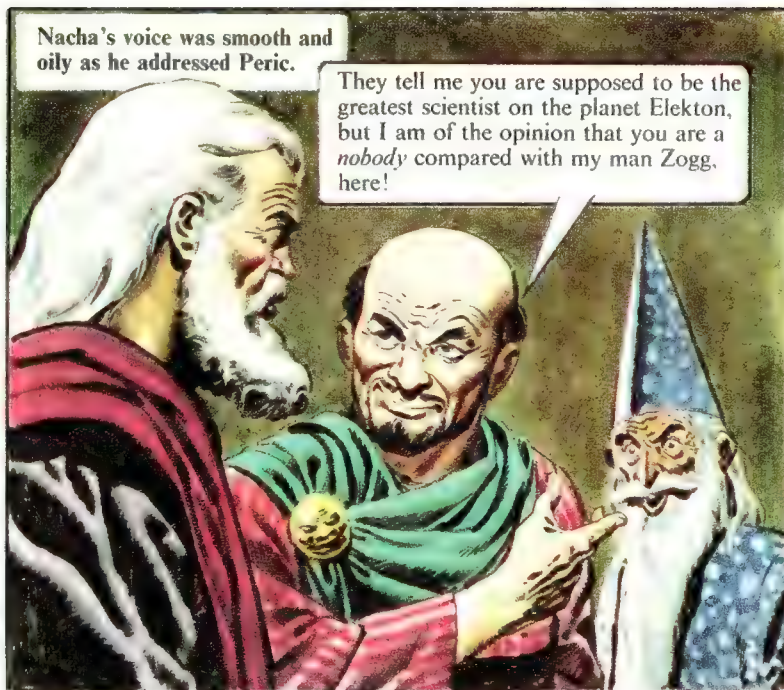
Fall in with the rest! We're going to the Palace!



The Trigan Peric is here as you ordered, Lord Nacha!

Excellent, excellent.

Later Janno kept in the shadows as Peric was ushered into the presence of Hericon's tyrant.



Peric eyed the strangely garbed figure with blank contempt.

Zogg? Never heard of him. What is he... a clown?

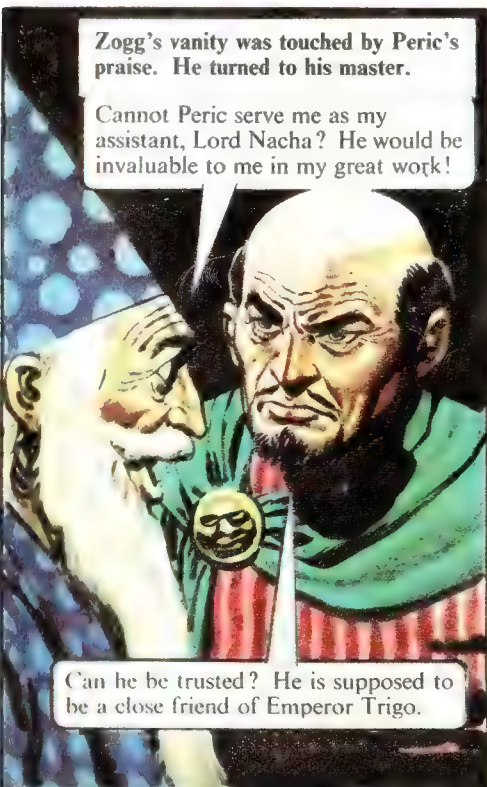
Ha! We shall see! Bring in the prisoner!

A frightened peasant was dragged in.

The unfortunate young man was seated in front of Zogg's infernal machine. A faint humming note, and his appearance began to change!



The peasant was led away, a doddering old man. And Peric turned to Zogg, his eyes alight with admiration.



Janno watched and listened with fury mounting in his heart.



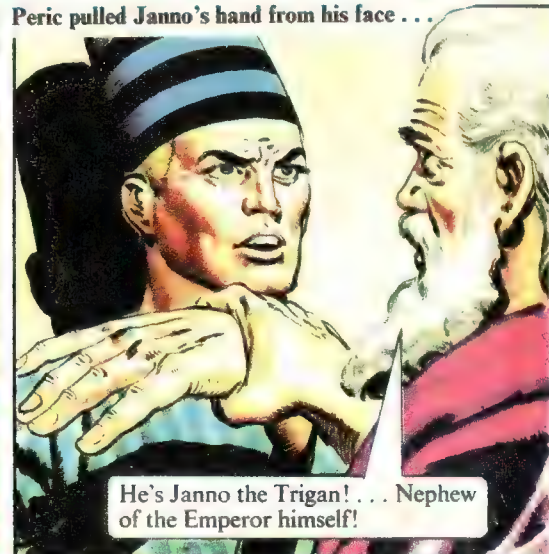
By means of a fiendish device which turned Nikko into an old man, the evil Nacha has made himself master of the kingdom of Hericon. He has also, apparently, won the loyalty of the Trigan scientist Peric . . . much to the fury of Peric's friend Janno . . .

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

Then it happened . . . Peric glanced across the chamber . . . Janno felt a thrill of fear as their eyes met.



Peric pulled Janno's hand from his face . . .



A scarlet fury burnt in Janno's brain!



They dragged him, dazed, to his feet.



And then . . .



Peric appealed to his new master, the strange old scientist Zogg.

Would it not be better to keep the Trigan as a subject for further experiments with your device?





He was left with his bitter thoughts.

So Janno was dragged to a dungeon beneath the palace . . . and thrown in.

I would have staked my life on Peric's devotion to the Trigan Empire! If he's not to be trusted, what hope is there?

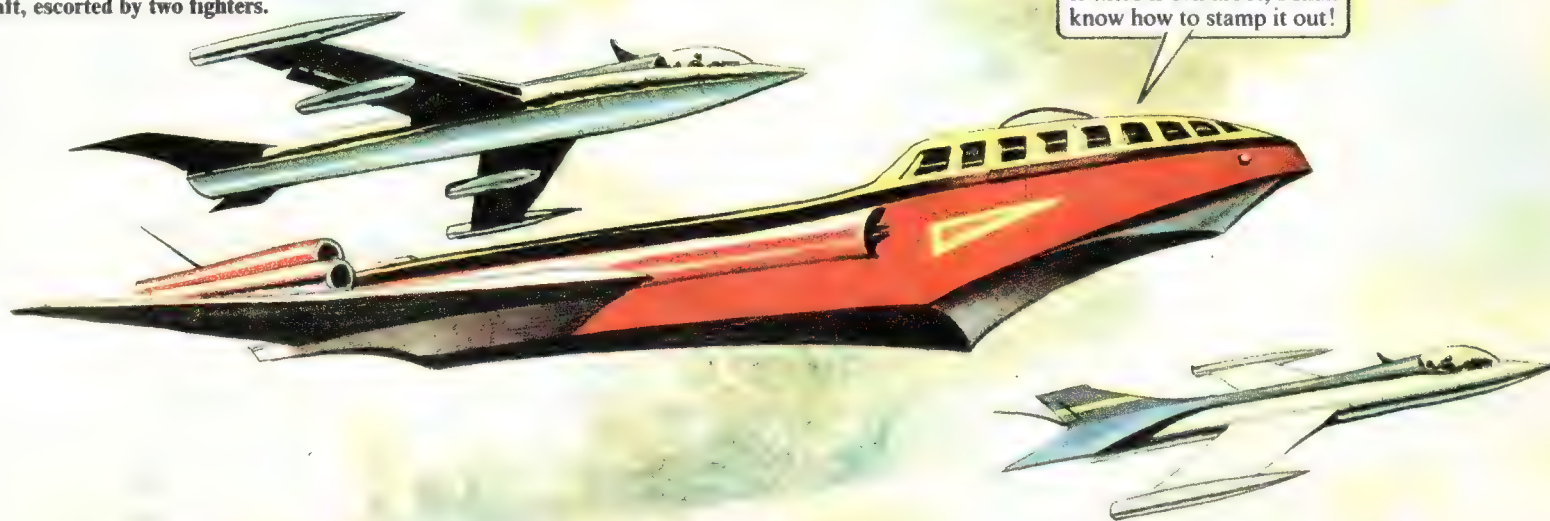


Meanwhile, back in distant Trigan City, the Emperor Trigo was growing daily more anxious.

No news from Hericon, imperial Majesty! They don't reply to any of our signals!

There's some demon's work afoot in Hericon! By the planets, I'll go there myself and find out who's behind it all!

Trigo took off in his personal craft, escorted by two fighters.



If there is evil afoot, I shall know how to stamp it out!

Towards evening of that same day, the news was brought to Nacha.



Three Trigan craft are circling the city . . . one of them is identified as the Emperor's craft! Shall I order the batteries to blow them out of the sky, Lord Nacha?

No!



Zogg! You and your assistant will prepare the device for use in the Emperor's bed-chamber tonight! Understood?

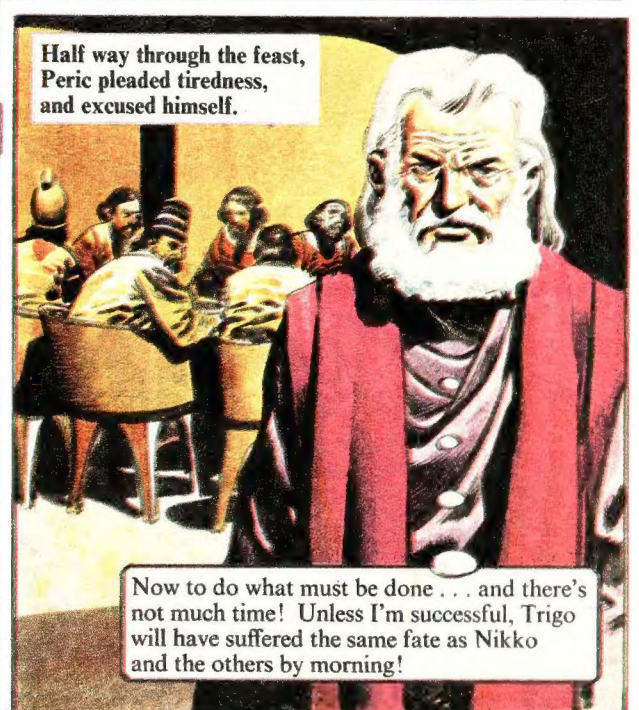
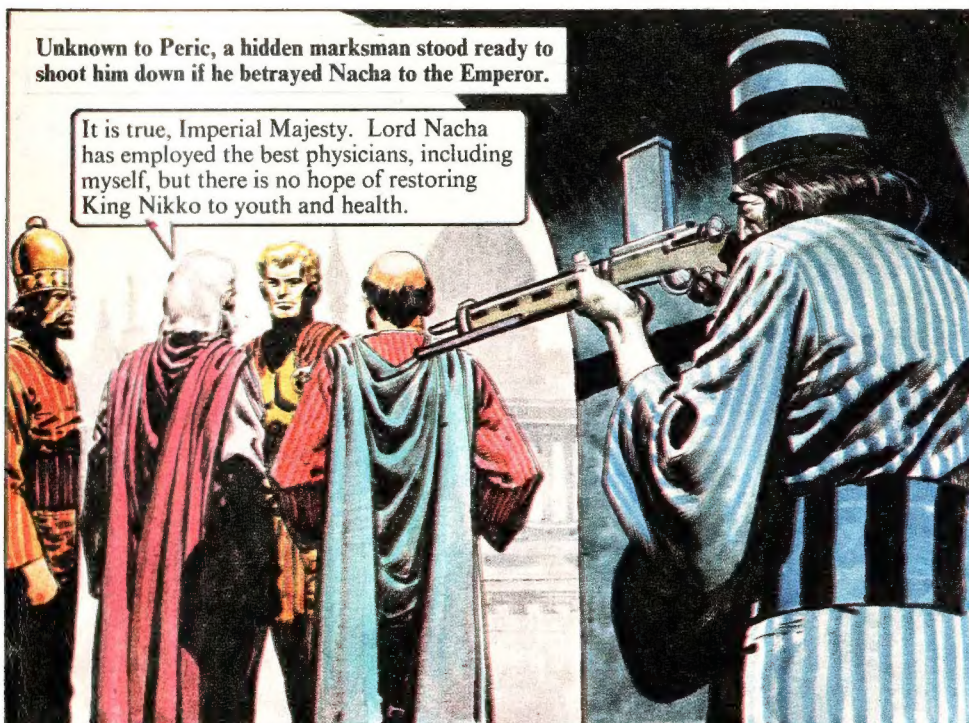
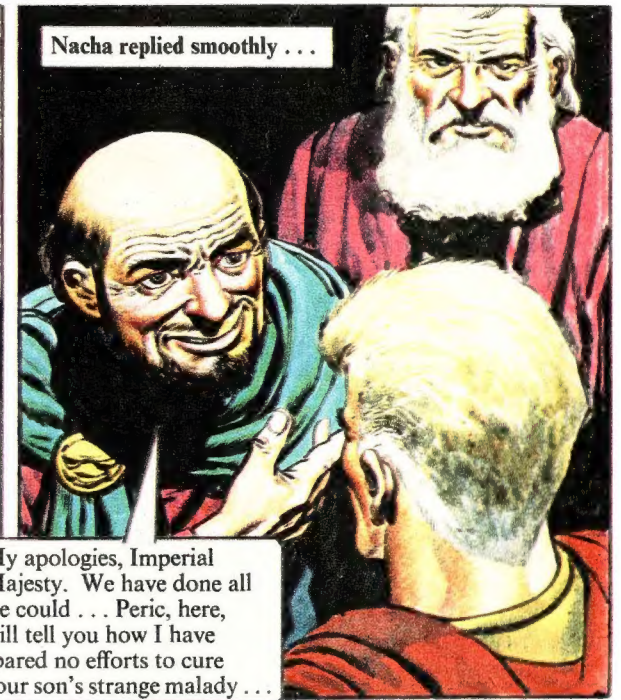
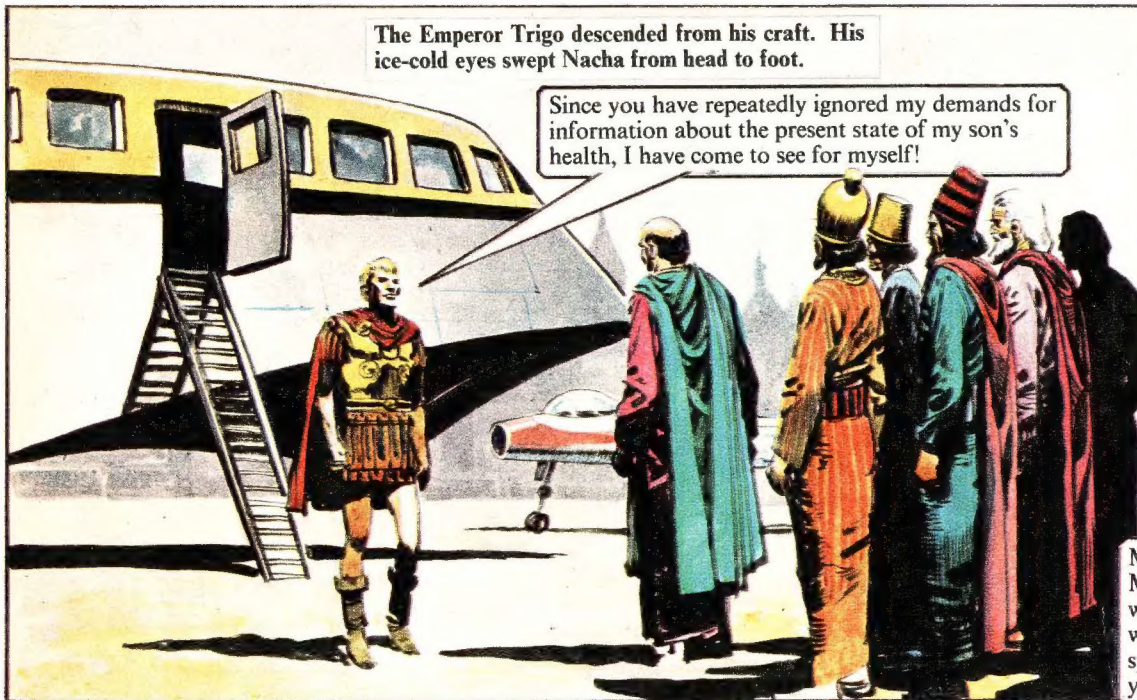
Yes, my Lord! . . . It will be a pleasure!



Tonight, I shall feast his imperial Majesty . . . and by morning, the Trigan Empire will also be ruled by a doddering old man!

THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

By means of a fiendish device which can turn young men into dotards, the evil Nacha has made himself master of the Kingdom of Hericon. Now the Trigan Emperor has arrived in Hericon to find out what is going on in his vassal kingdom.



In the dungeons below the palace, Janno was roughly awakened.



On your feet, animal!

On Peric's instructions, he was dragged to a chamber where the fiendish machine stood ready.



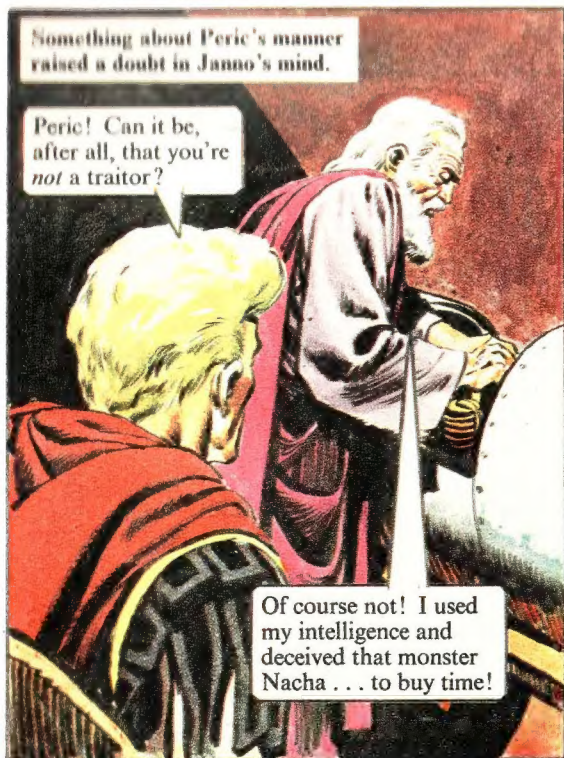
Bind him to the chair in front of the device . . . and then leave us!

Alone, Janno snarled at the old man whom he had believed to be his friend . . . but . . .

Despicable animal! . . . Accursed traitor!

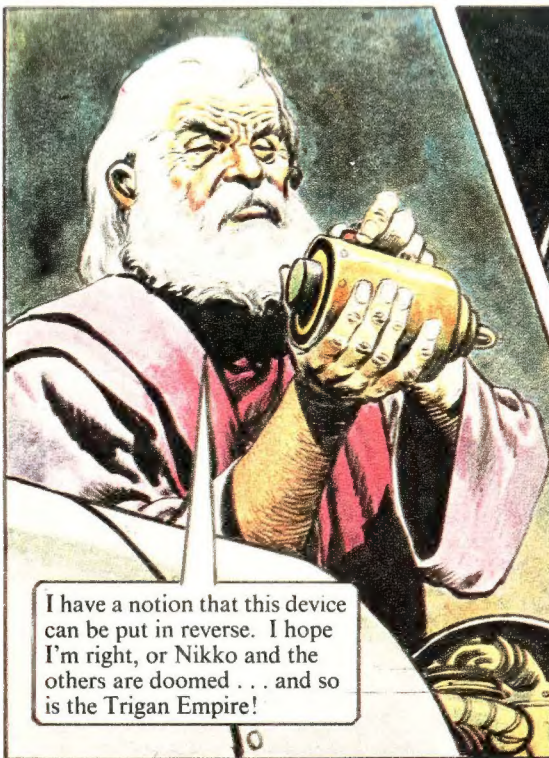
Be quiet, you young fool . . . you don't know what you're talking about!

Something about Peric's manner raised a doubt in Janno's mind.



Peric! Can it be, after all, that you're not a traitor?

Of course not! I used my intelligence and deceived that monster Nacha . . . to buy time!



I have a notion that this device can be put in reverse. I hope I'm right, or Nikko and the others are doomed . . . and so is the Trigan Empire!

There's nothing else for it, Janno . . . I shall have to experiment on you! Take hold of your courage . . . what you are doing, you are doing for the Empire!



A faint humming note emerged from the infernal device . . .



No! . . . No!

Courage, Janno . . . Courage!

Moments later, a thin wail arose in the chamber . . . and from the pile of clothing on the chair a young baby emerged!



Ba-a-a-aw!

Aaaaah! So the device *can* be reversed! . . . but can it be precisely controlled?

By means of a fiendish device which can make young men age in a few seconds, the evil Nacha has made himself master of the Kingdom of Hericon.

But during an experiment on his young friend Janno, the scientist Peric has found a way to put the device into reverse . . .

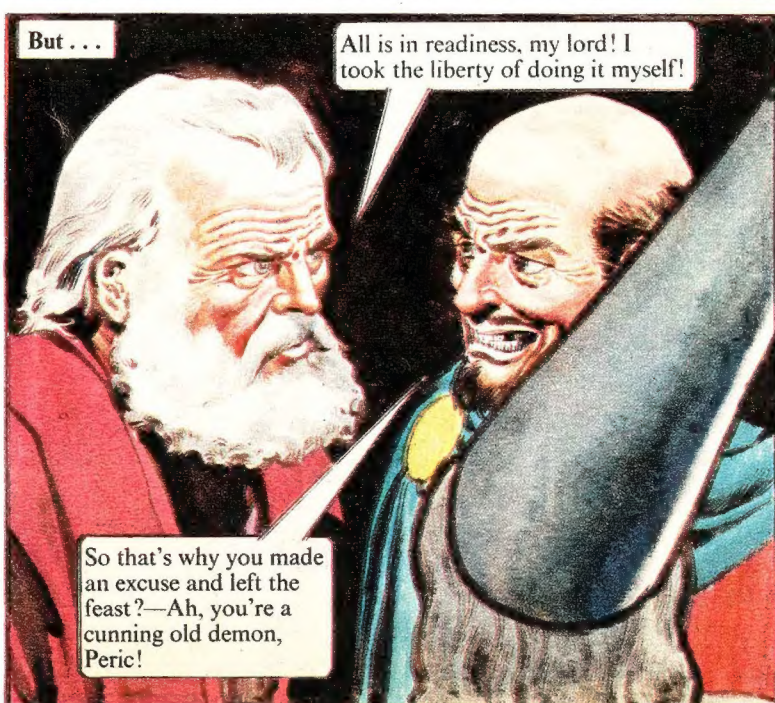
THE TRIGAN EMPIRE



When Peric returned to the Great Hall, the feast in the Emperor's honour had just finished. Peric joined Nacha and the sinister scientist Zogg.



True enough! But, when Nacha hears of it, we'll all be killed . . . including the Emperor!



Nacha retired to his bedchamber, well satisfied with his dastardly plans.



And then . . . a faint humming note from behind the mirror . . .



The sentry outside the door heard the high-pitched wail of a baby. He burst in . . .

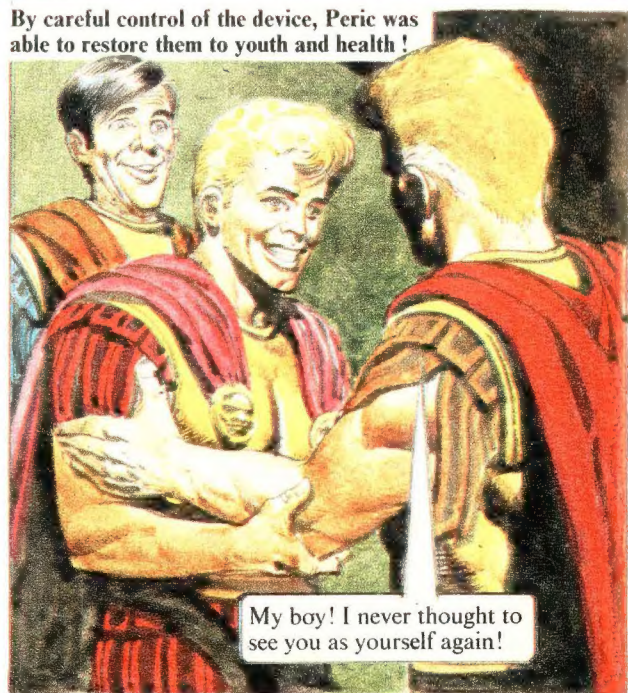


There is not much more to tell. Trigo was informed of the plot, and immediately took steps. Within the hour, Nikko and the other victims were led towards the sinister device.

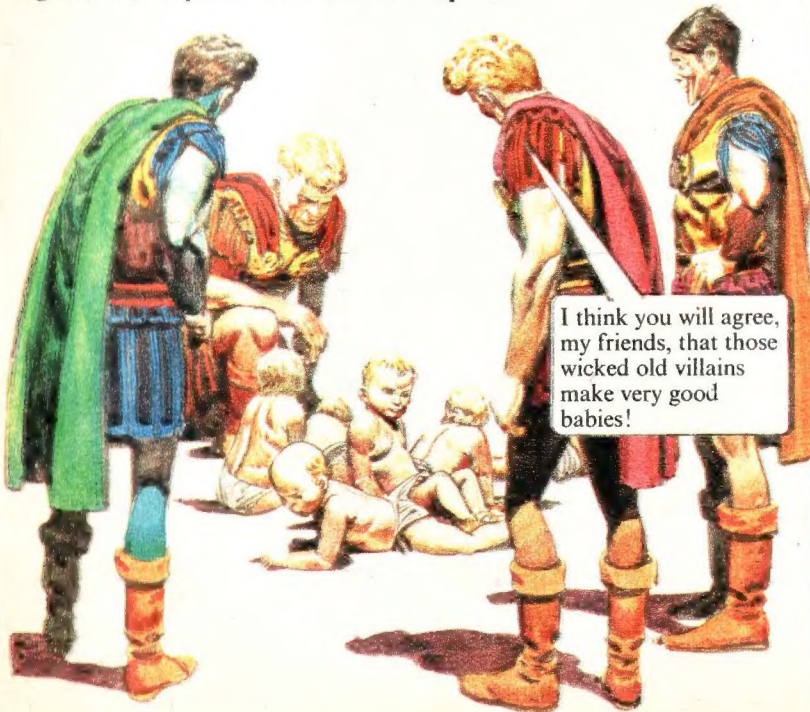
Be seated here, Nikko . . .



By careful control of the device, Peric was able to restore them to youth and health!



As for Nacha, Zogg and the rascally Council of Regents, who had plotted to take over the Empire . . .



Now they can start all over again! Perhaps, with better upbringing, they will grow up to be useful members of the Trigan Empire!



At dawn next day, Trigo left Hericon and returned to Trigan City.



NEXT WEEK: A NEW CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE TRIGAN EMPIRE